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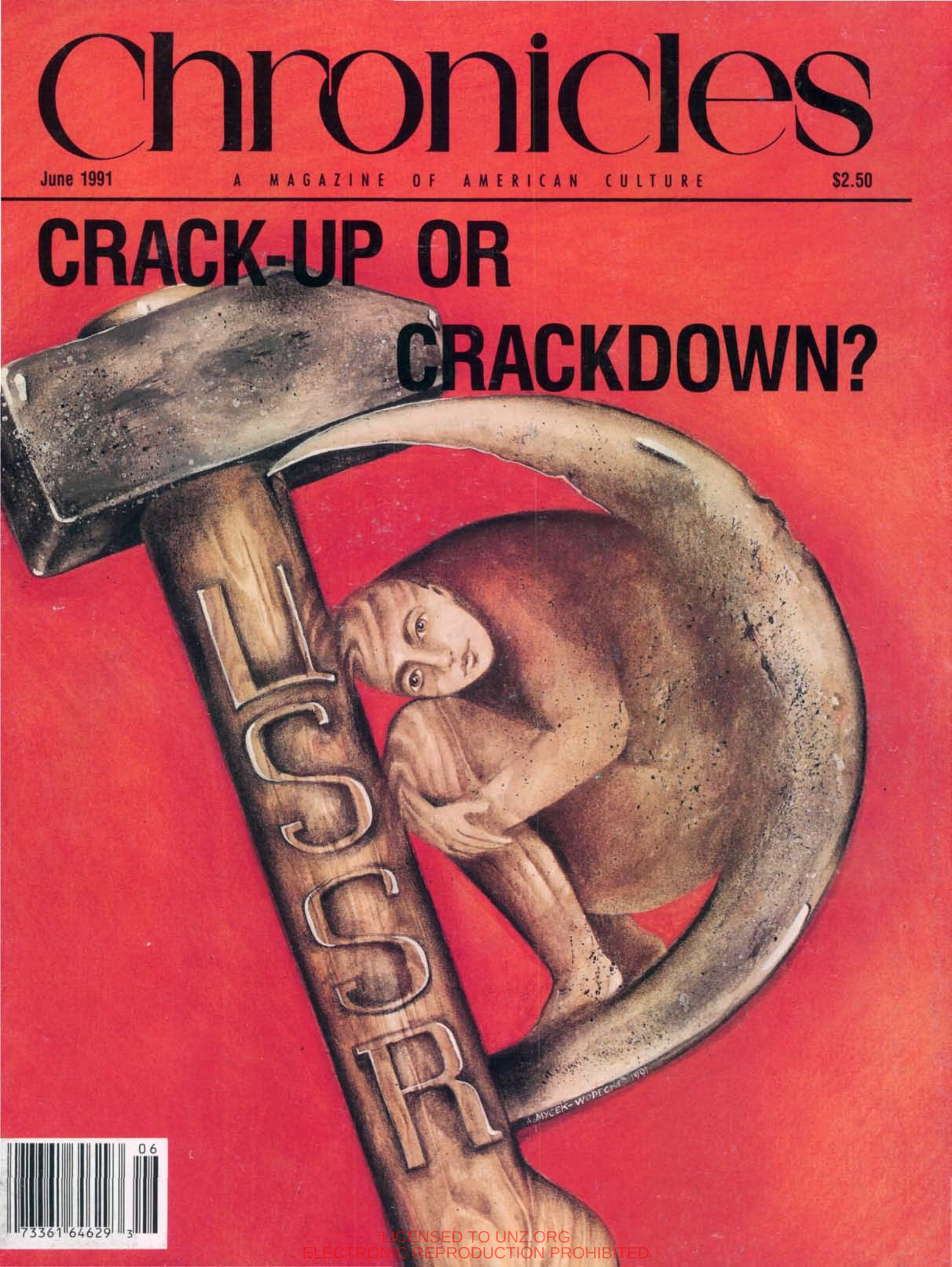


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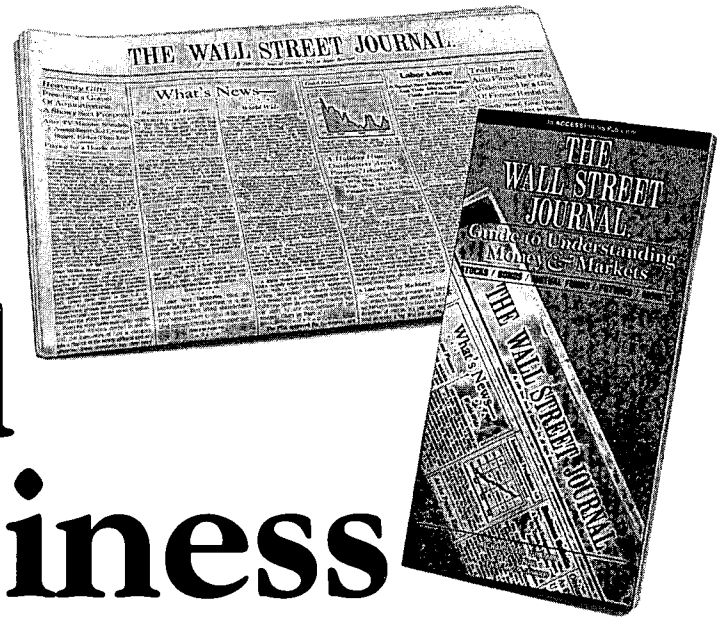


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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

*"The world in all doth but two nations bear,—*
*the good, the bad; and these mixed everywhere."*
—Andrew Marvell

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## On 'Soviet Reform'

Just how valid are the views of Yuri N. Maltsev (Cultural Revolutions, March 1991) was made clear to me on a recent trip to the Soviet Union. What Gorbachev and company won't accept is that the Communist Party *centrally planned* the nation into its present economic chaos, and it is highly unlikely that it can centrally plan its way out. They refuse to acknowledge that the present system is designed for inefficiency.

For the Communist Party, *perestroika* was a mistake it did not deal with soon enough. It was to have been the pinhole through which the party permitted Gorbachev to bleed off some of the people's pent-up anger. But under the enormous pressure built up over 73 years, the pinhole threatened to become a huge rupture, which could culminate in an explosion strong enough to sweep away the entire party apparatus.

To muffle or prevent the explosion, they reason, will require the use of force. That's clear from the alliance forged between the hard-liners, the KGB, and the military. There is no widespread support for the status quo among the people. As a former government official in Moscow told me, "The Russian people have never had anything, and we don't expect anything under *perestroika*."

And their expectations are justified, as long as Gorbachev prefers to play to the gallery of hard-liners in the Kremlin, rather than lose his job—or become a candidate for martyrdom by working for real reform.

*—Donald G. Mashburn*
*Oklahoma City, OK*

## On 'Freedom of Speech'

Paul Gottfried's excellent article (Cultural Revolutions, March 1991) highlights a long-standing weakness of the American right: its reluctance to embrace the cause of freedom of speech and inquiry in general, and of academic freedom in particular. The right wing of the 1950's and 1960's was willing and eager to make two grave breaches in freedom of speech: the freedom of Communists or pro-Communists to speak and agitate, and the freedom of pornographers. Apart from the handful of libertarians, these important causes were left to the none-too-tender mercies of the left, which cast aside freedom of speech and inquiry as soon as it became dominant on the American campus and in our culture generally. Unfortunately, as Gottfried points out, the current conservative movement is scarcely well-equipped to combat the current plague of "political correctness," since to its two previous violations of freedom of expression it has now added a politically correct agenda of its own, including the proscribing of "hate speech" and the propagation of "undemocratic values."

All this points up a liberation lesson to all parts of the ideological spectrum: that freedom is indivisible, and that property rights entail not only the right to keep and to exchange one's property, but also the right to hire a hall or publish a pamphlet.

One point: Gottfried might be a little too optimistic in holding that "the respectable right . . . believes that the democratic revolution is mostly over at home." They are already advocating further extensions of redistribution and the welfare state in the name of "empowerment," and there is also the unfinished task of stamping out those unreconstructed right-wingers who refuse to concede that thinking on social issues must be circumscribed by the range of thought stretching between Jesse Jackson and Martin Luther King.

*—Murray Rothbard*
*Las Vegas, NV*

Paul Gottfried labors under a misunderstanding when he writes that Michael Levin was "driven" from the board of the National Association of Scholars because of his opinions about differences in measurable intelligence among racial groups. In fact, Professor Levin



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left our board because of his advocacy, in a paper circulated at a conference on urban crime at Long Island University last spring, of public policies involving the disparate treatment of individuals based on race. Among other things, he suggested that separate subway cars be set aside for male black students traveling to and from New York City's public schools.

The NAS takes no position with respect to disputes in demography or, for that matter, with respect to those in most other areas of scholarly controversy. We do, however, have strong principled convictions that inform our views about academic policy, one of which is that individuals should be treated on the basis of personal merit rather than ancestry. To ensure that there could be no confusion about our continued adherence to this principle (now so routinely flouted in the academy), we requested Professor Levin's resignation from our board.

I should note, in addition, that our legitimate concern for maintaining the integrity of the NAS's principles does not affect our commitment to defend the academic freedom of those who may differ with them.

*—Stephen H. Balch*
*President and Executive Director,*
*National Association of Scholars*
*Princeton, NJ*

## On 'Restoring Island Park'

Suppose the proposal set forth by John and Ramona Baden and Ron Cooper (February 1991) to put Island Park under an "Ecological Endowment Board" is implemented in a way "carefully designed to avoid incentives that give rise to [the profit motive]." What does that imply about the remaining 195 million acres of National Forest land? That it be parceled out to hundreds of "Ecological Boards," each "carefully designed" to restore some vague "ecological heritage"? Does one have any doubt that such a system would evolve finally into a decentralized bureaucracy that would still be supported by taxes and would be even less efficient than the present one?

Restoring ecological heritage cannot be regarded as a logical management goal for any piece of land, and outlawing the profit motive entirely is an almost certain program for eventual resource devaluation. It is the profit that land generates under management that guarantees value and stability of the resource. No matter how noble the goals, profit and loss computations cannot be forever avoided. The point these critics glide over is that resource-use goals can be clearly defined and systematically approached, while maximizing "the restoration of ecological heritage" remains forever vague and probably unattainable. The latter is not a goal in itself but only a vague and inadequate criterion for choosing goals.

The program offered by the Badens and Mr. Cooper is further weakened by their misleading analysis of the problems in Island Park. All wildlife managers I know will list cutover land as better ungulate habitat than full forest cover (particularly coniferous cover that promotes very little forage near the ground). If there are more elk in Yellowstone than in Island Park, can it not be that hunting has long been prevented in the National Park and permitted in the National Forest? Furthermore, there is no experimental evidence that cutting trees above trout streams damages the sport fishery (most of the marvelous trout and salmon streams of the British Isles run through open sheep pasture). To be sure, bad roading and site preparation for planting can damage trout habitat, but the authors make no mention of this fact, preferring to ride the tired old anti-clearcutting hobbyhorse. The authors ignore the justification for the clearcutting in Island Park, namely a bark beetle infestation of unprecedented scope and intensity. The Forest Service was surely justified in salvaging dead and infected timber, not only to utilize as much of the dying material as possible but to dampen the extreme fire hazards that miles of contiguous dead conifers posed to the properties nearby (among these, Yellowstone Park).

*—John D. Hewlett*
*Athens, GA*

## On 'Letter From Paris'

Curtis Cate makes some interesting observations in the March issue, but when he disserts on railroads he tends to derail.

Passenger service was the bane of virtually *all* American railroading, in the old days accepted and subsidized by the various companies as a matter of pride, a showcase, a standard bearer for the system. Those days are with the snows of yesteryear; now it's all dollars, demographics, and dullness. But where we do have the population Amtrak does far better than "shake and rattle uncontrollably as the speed approaches 80." Service at 125 mph is a commonplace on most of the 227 miles between Washington and New York, and I've never had a drink so much as slosh a drop onto the parlor car seat-tray.

The TGVs that dash across France are a technological marvel, but the point must be made that the TGV lines on which the high speeds are attained are dedicated *to the TGV solely*. Where, between New York and Washington (and Boston, if we discuss the entire Northeast Corridor), could a useful right-of-way possibly be found? Or purchased? Or even condemned?

Emotionally, I agree with Mr. Cate. Every time I ride SNCF (or Deutsche Bundesbahn, for that matter) I find myself wishing I could whip down to New Orleans from home with such speed and comfort—until reality catches me up: French *National* railways, German *Federal* Railway, government operations since 1938 and 1920, respectively. And because of certain well-known demolition activities in the mid-1940's, France (and most of Western Europe) has a dazzlingly modern rail system even without the TGV; nothing like starting off fresh.

As corridors develop in this country, something like the present British 125-mph diesel-electric train sets, which operate quite successfully on existing rail lines, will find a market. But this will not occur without a fight; it's one thing to tax a homogeneous nation such as France for TGV lines, but we'll have to fight to get the citizens of East Gulch, Montana, to pay for Boston-Washington playtoys. The more one looks, the more one realizes that there's not a lot that the rail systems of America and Europe have in common, excepting the track gauge. (Sigh.)

*—Robert J. Powers*
*Shreveport, LA*



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THE PERSIAN GULF was recently the scene for a replay of the Spanish-American War. This time our "Manifest Destiny" was the "New World Order." Our Teddy "Rough Rider" Roosevelt was "Stormin' Norman" Schwarzkopf. Our "Butcher" Weyler was "Hitler" Hussein. Our Frederic Remington was Peter Arnett. Our "Cuban sugar" was Kuwaiti oil. Both wars were crusades for the liberation of a small and defenseless country from an oppressive, "inhuman," but weak and financially drained power, and both wars were immensely popular, shockingly short, and studded with decisive victories and few battlefield losses.

The analogy of choice, however, remains World War II. The national press continues to compare the ending of the Persian Gulf War with the euphoric defeat of Germany and Japan. As David Brinkley put it, "World War II is no longer America's 'last great war.'" Never mind that our involvement in that war lasted four years, that we entered it because American personnel and matériel had actually been attacked, and never mind that the American Army didn't have to issue "Why We Are Here" cards to our soldiers in the Pacific.

Never mind all of this, because it merely gets in the way of our new national pastime, gloating. Everyone's doing it—the President, the press, Congress, the Army, and apparently every barber and shoe salesman from Topeka to Charlotte. The lie is that we paid one of the lowest prices in history for our right to gloat. President Bush puts the cost at slightly more than one hundred dead Americans. Others put the cost at more than one hundred thousand dead Iraqis.

The biggest gloater of all has been General Schwarzkopf. At his postwar press conference, he congratulated the American press for its "cooperation" in disseminating Allied propaganda concerning troop strength and preparedness in the early stages of the war. "We couldn't have done it without you," he said. Few of the reporters seemed even to get the joke.

But the Allies' "yellow press" really needed little goading. The British and American Jimmy Olsens of the desert were actually more than happy to report that Allied forces "took out," eliminated, and neutralized, while Iraqis killed, slaughtered, and destroyed; that the Allies held "press briefings" and issued "reporting guidelines," while Iraq conducted censorship and issued propaganda; that Allied forces "dug in," while Iraqis "cowered in their foxholes"; that Tomahawk missiles scored direct hits, while Scud missiles were "intercepted" and scored merely "with debris"; that Allied forces launched "first strikes" and did so "preemptively," while Iraq conducted "sneak missile attacks" and did so "without provocation"; that Allied planes bombed with precision accuracy, while Iraqis shot "wildly at anything in sight"; that Allied planes only suffered "attrition," while Iraqi planes were "shot out of the sky"; that Iraqi bombings killed civilians, while Allied bombings caused merely "collateral damage"; that the Allies constituted a "formidable force," whereas Iraq had amassed "a war machine"; that Allied forces were comprised of brave and loyal professional men and women, whereas Iraq had "overgrown schoolchildren" who were "blindly obedient"; that George Bush was "resolute," but Saddam Hussein, "defiant." With press coverage like this, who needs the First Amendment?

Shakespeare's King Henry V, in assessing the slaughter at Agincourt—ten thousand dead French and less than thirty dead English—asked, "Was ever known so great and little loss / On one part and on th' other? Take it, God, / For it is none but thine!" The American secretary of state, however, is no humble Henry: "It has been a splendid little war, begun with the highest motives, carried on with magnificent intelligence and spirit." That might have been James Baker or President Bush talking, but it was Secretary of State John Hay in 1898.

—*Theodore Pappas*

ENTERPRISE ZONES are the subject of Jeffrey Tucker's article in this issue; Mr. Tucker found that despite the free-market wrapping paper Jack Kemp's gift to the American public is only more welfare, this time for businessmen. The original idea, as it was transported here from Thatcher's England by Stuart Butler, was that economically depressed areas should get a break from all government regulations in an effort to kick-start the local economy. The utter reversal of meaning of the term is reminiscent of the transformation of "educational choice." Sheldon Richman's article on choice, which ran in *Chronicles* in March of 1990, documented the sea change that word has undergone in its journey from Good Idea to White House policy. Parental choice and the freedom to choose a school among a mix of public, private, and parochial schools, without the double burden of school taxes and tuition, has come to mean choice within the public school system only. Such is the complete victory of the new definition that education reporters now regularly use the term "choice" as if it never had any but its second meaning.

These two examples are not coincidental, just typical. When Orwell had Oceania fighting a perpetual war for perpetual peace he was not making a prediction about the nature of despotic power but an observation. Governments have always fought defensive wars of aggression, and on the domestic front as well, no tactic is so effective as to take the language of one's critics, redefine it, and embrace the revised concept as your own—because now it is your own.

Congress, the Executive Branch, and the millions who administer the appropriations money, by men who are even weaker and more venal than the rest of us, are not interested in salvaging an inner city or improving education—only in expanding their own influence and buying more votes. This is one of the many reasons why reform will never come from the top down, and those who are looking for leadership from Washington, whether their cause is abortion or acid rain, are



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spending their time and money not in vain but in support of the very government that is the source of the trouble.

—*Katherine Dalton*

**MARTIN LUTHER KING'S** plagiarism continues to send after-shocks. Ralph Luker has been dropped as the associate editor of the King Papers Project; his contract was not renewed last January. Clayborne Carson's staff has reportedly been in disarray for quite some time, and sources associated with the Project called Luker "expendable," the "fall guy," the "sacrificial lamb" needed to get the King Papers Project back on track. It was Luker's misfortune to be editing the Project's volume that dealt with King's plagiarized dissertation.

Sources also cite Coretta King as being "less than helpful" throughout this entire episode. Her refusal to release her husband's handwritten dissertation note cards reportedly strained her relations with Carson and the Project, and one source even blamed her uncooperativeness for the Project's delay in coming forth with the evidence of King's plagiarism. Such excuses won't wash. Mrs. King may be as guilty as Mr. Carson is in hindering the uncovering of the truth, and note cards may be helpful in explaining how the plagiarism was conducted, but neither Mrs. King's cooperation nor the dissertation note cards are needed to substantiate King's offense.

One source attempted to defend the Project's handling of this matter by arguing, "It's not the business of scholars to report politically sensitive information; that's the business of journalists." Recent history, however, doesn't bear this out. Innumerable scholars were involved in compiling the Kurt Waldheim dossier, including University of South Carolina professor Robert Herzstein, and their discoveries were published as soon as they were made. Nor did the editors at the University of Nebraska Press lie about the evidence, misrepresent the facts, or attempt a cover-up of the issue—as Clayborne Carson has admittedly done—when they came upon the pro-fascist writings of Paul de Man. The scholarly community did its job in both instances: it pursued the truth and set forth the evidence for the world to see and examine for itself.

In fact, the University of Nebraska Press started editing De Man's writings about the same time Clayborne Carson claims to have uncovered solid evidence of King's plagiarism, in 1988, and since then Nebraska has published two formidable books on De Man. What has Clayborne Carson accomplished during this same time? He has received a reported half-million dollars of the taxpayers' money and published not a single volume of King's works—and the King Papers Project has been in existence for seven years. The one article he did write on the subject was rejected by the *Journal of American History* because of his lack of forthrightness with the evidence; as one source put it, Carson was asked to rewrite the article "with more of an interpretation." The *Journal* has scheduled a round-table discussion of King's plagiarism for its spring issue.

President John Silber of Boston University has meanwhile asked Robert Neville, the dean of B.U.'s School of Theology, to head a four-person committee to "investigate" King's plagiarism. Mr. Neville told me that the committee had completed its investigation and passed on its findings to Silber, who as of this writing had not yet commented publicly on the committee's report. Let's hope the committee concentrated on what action B.U. should take in light of King's plagiarism instead of stonewalling with an "investigation" into the "allegation" of plagiarism. Establishing a committee to investigate the validity of the charge is what Jon Westling and B.U. should have done eight months ago. Establishing a committee to do so now is about as useful as investigating whether John Silber really isn't governor of Massachusetts.

Finally, in a matter not entirely unrelated, Arizonans were indeed punished for their politically incorrect vote on a paid holiday to honor King. Paul Tagliabue, the Torquemada of professional football, announced the sentence at the NFL owners' annual *auto-da-fé* last March: the 1993 Super Bowl would be moved from Phoenix to either San Diego or Pasadena. Tagliabue hinted that, if Arizonans would recant their heathen ways by voting in a paid holiday for King next year, the NFL might grace Phoenix with the Super Bowl in 1996.

To anyone who believes voting costs nothing in America—think again.

—*Theodore Pappas*

**ALL IN THE FAMILY**, the 1970's TV series in which Norman Lear sought to convince the world that Middle Americans were ignorant bigots like Archie Bunker, recently had its twentieth anniversary special on CBS. It brought back fond memories. Sure, the show was always—as Archie would have put it—your basic pinko propaganda through and through, designed to make us ridicule and repudiate our forebears and our traditions, and to turn us all into New Socialist Persons, or even worse, McGovern Democrats. But Archie Bunker was my first clue that there was such a thing as a reactionary, and that I could be one too.

Growing up in the 70's in the campus town of Urbana, Illinois, I used to run home from high school indoctrination class to catch *All in the Family* in afternoon reruns. Archie was portrayed as a rude, crude blowhard given to mangling logic and the English language; his lefty son-in-law Mike (the "Meathead") was shown to be intelligent, rational, enlightened, and progressive. I quickly decided I was an Archie sympathizer.

As it happened, I had a lot more company than I knew. A poll taken while the series was at its most popular revealed that the vast majority of Americans liked and respected Archie Bunker more than his son-in-law. Although they didn't share his racial attitudes, they saw Archie as the solid, patriotic workingman; whereas the Meathead was just an atheistic student radical who sponged off Archie and the America he represented while ungratefully biting the hand that fed him. These results were reported with dismay in a *TV Guide* cover story I still recall for its title: "*All in the Family*: Is America Missing the Point?"

As the years went by, events conspired to vindicate Archie, no matter how hard the writers tried to make him a fool. He proved to be a fair political prognosticator: in a 1976 post-election show, he closed an argument by hollering, "Yer gonna get REEgan in 1980, wise guy!" (The studio audience



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howled at that one.) Later, he worked his way up from foreman on a loading platform to owner of a neighborhood bar, which gave way to the spin-off series *Archie Bunker's Place*. It was at this point that Lear gave up on satire and began portraying an Archie who had mellowed and begun to grow sensitive to minorities and left-wing causes, and it is also at this point that the show left the air.

And the Meathead? The last word came in the spin-off series: he ran out on his wife and son, took up with a younger woman, and retreated to a California commune.

—*Matthew Kaufman*

LAST DECEMBER, almost five hundred black men, women, and children met on Jekyll Island, Georgia, for the first National Kwanzaa Celebration. No whites were allowed. Solemnized with what the *Atlanta Constitution* called "none of the usual holiday hype," Kwanzaa is a week-long black religious festival founded in 1966 by Maulana Karenga, a professor of black studies at Cal State Long Beach. Kwanzaa—Swahili for "first fruits"—is "a holiday created by Africans for Africans," said Karenga, and it ran from December 26th to January 1st.

The sponsor of the Jekyll Island program was the National Black Wholistic Society, an organization that, in the words of its founder, Professor Haki Madhubuti of Chicago, seeks "to introduce our people to a way of life that's not conflictual with the way of nature." The society made sure, for example, that every meal had a vegetarian entrée such as *akara*, mashed black-eyed peas baked in a patty, and that foods were cooked in the "way of nature," such as sautéing collard greens in olive oil rather than salt pork. Speakers at the gathering, in addition to Karenga, included Professor Nain Akbar of Florida State University on "Spirit, Water: The Healing of Our African Souls" and psychiatrist Frances Cress Welsing of Washington, D.C., on "Building Families to Destroy White World Supremacy."

The highlight was the "African Spiritual Reclamation Service," an outdoor candlelight ceremony in honor of African ancestors. Participants asked the spirits of the dead "to feed us today," said celebrant Chester Grundy, head of minority affairs at the University of Kentucky.

In Atlanta, there was a Kwanzaa parade through downtown and "standing-room only" for the celebrations, said Akbar Imohotep, director of the Metro-Atlanta Kwanzaa Association. At high schools, community centers, and churches, blacks celebrated the seven principles of Kwanzaa: *umoja*, racial unity; *kujichagulia*, racial self-determination; *ujima*, racial responsibility; *ujamaa*, racial economics; *nia*, racial restoration; *kuumba*, racial neighborhoods; and *imani*, ancestor worship.

The Kwanzaa crèche, used for public and private devotions, has seven items: *mazao*, crops produced by collective agriculture; *muhindi*, an ear of corn for each child in the family; *kikombe cha umoja*, the "cup of racial unity" from which libations are poured for the ancestors; *mkeka*, a mat representing African traditions; *kinara*, a seven-branched candelabrum symbolizing ancestral Africans; *mishumaa saba*, seven candles for the seven principles of Kwanzaa; and *zawadi*, handmade gifts exchanged between parents and children.

Kwanzaa "should not be seen as a rejection of Christmas or Christianity," said Professor Karenga. Rather, it makes sure that blacks "don't have to adjust to a white man in a red suit or a white child in a manger."

—*Llewellyn H. Rockwell*

# Principalities & Powers

*by Samuel Francis*

Lewis Namier liked to tell the story of an English schoolboy who was asked to define "imperialism" on an examination paper. "Imperialism," the budding proconsul wrote, "is learning how to get along with one's social inferiors." In the Edwardian twilight of the British Empire, that answer might have sufficed to win a scholarship to Balliol, but these days the lad would be lucky not to wind up in jail for a hate crime.

Yet, despite Western genuflections to self-determination and global democracy, empire, like Ché and Elvis, lives. Indeed, the rationale for imperialism is no longer the callow snobbery of Eton and Sandhurst, Social Darwinist rumblings, or Rudyard Kipling's "white man's burden," but the very same progressivist slogans that provide the lyrics for what is supposed to be the imperial recessional. For all of President Bush's invocation of the "international rule of law" and the "New World Order" in cranking up Western war machines for the crusade against Iraq last winter, the war was no sooner concluded than American and European diplomats, corporate satraps, global welfare workers, and assorted do-gooders descended onto the deserts of the Middle East to bring the locals up to snuff. It's true that American conquistadors didn't plant Old Glory on the shore or hang the sheiks and emirs from the nearest kumquat bush, but nobody out there could have had any illusion as to who was really in charge. It wasn't Saddam Hussein, let alone that merry old soul, His Majesty the Emir Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir Al Sabah.

Imperialism is the systematic domination of one or several countries by another, and although empire historically involves all the splendiferous trappings of formality and ceremony, it doesn't really need them. Only those whose grasp of public affairs remains at the level of junior-high-school civics believe that the international power wielded by the United States and the Soviet Union since 1945 hasn't constituted a kind of empire, and with Muscovy wheezing and whimpering its way toward disintegration, the end game has left the United States the only player on the board. In 1947, James Burnham, surveying the realities of world power in the wake of World War II, understood what was happening.

"Western civilization," Burnham wrote, using the language and ideas of Arnold J. Toynbee, whose multivolume



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A *Study of History* had recently been published,

> has reached the stage in its development that calls for the creation of its Universal Empire. The technological and institutional character of Western civilization is such that a Universal Empire of Western Civilization would necessarily be a World Empire. In the world there are only two power centers adequate to make a serious attempt to meet this challenge. The simultaneous existence of these two centers, and only these two, introduces into world political relationships an intolerable disequilibrium. . . . This issue will be decided, and in our day. In the course of the decision, both of the present antagonists may, it is true, be destroyed. But one of them must be.

Burnham's prophecy has proved essentially correct, but it needs to be qualified by consideration of certain changes in the character of "Western civilization."

All civilizations of the past have been developments from a territorial base, identified with a particular city-state, ethnic group, culture, or nation, and the empires these civilizations have spawned have been merely those territorial bases writ large. The Athenian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman, and British Empires were simply the extensions of the power of Athens, Persia, Macedonia, Rome, and Great Britain to other territories.

But in the case of "Western civilization," as the phrase is invoked today, there is no unified territorial base. "The West," of course, means Western Europe and America, but those geographical expressions do not and never have referred to particular states. Not since the late Middle Ages has any single political entity claimed to represent or lead the "West," and even the Holy Roman Empire's pretensions were never accepted by lesser potentates in Europe, let alone outside it. As Voltaire remarked in a famous phrase, it was neither Holy nor Roman nor an Empire.

But, more significantly, what today is called the "West" has no specific relationship to Europe and America and the cultures they have bred, and "Western civilization" today is not carried by Europeans and Americans alone. Today the "West" means a set of ideas, skills, and techniques—"democracy," "science," "pluralism," "capitalism," "human rights," "technology"—that are so defined as to be universal. Anyone—a Kuwaiti with a computer or an M.B.A. in Milwaukee—can carry these ideas in his intellectual knapsack, and whithersoever he goeth, there also will go the "West."

"Western civilization" today, in other words, is a "civilization" that has disengaged itself from the historical, cultural, and political bodies of Western Europe and America, and this kind of disengagement of a civilization from particular, territorially based cultural and political units appears to be unique in human history. What it means is that the "West" no longer refers to such units, their members, and their institutions but to an elite—an elite that does not regard itself as part of or loyal to a


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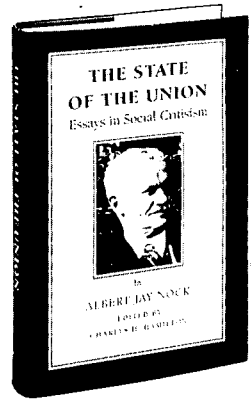


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specific cultural or political identity and is formed and distinguished merely by its possession of the skills and its adherence to the ideas that define the "West" in the abstract sense in which our contemporaries use the term.

It also means that what is expanding in power over the non-"Western" world is not a political or cultural unit, as in historical imperialism, but the elite itself, that it is the elite that is the imperial power and not the nations and cultures of Europe and America. And, finally, what that means is that the elite itself is in the process of disengaging from the underlying territorial cultural and political units of the geographical West and is becoming an independent entity, endowed with global power.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, in his 1970 book *Between Two Ages*, which is a kind of blueprint for the New World Order, almost explicitly acknowledges this point. "Today," he wrote,

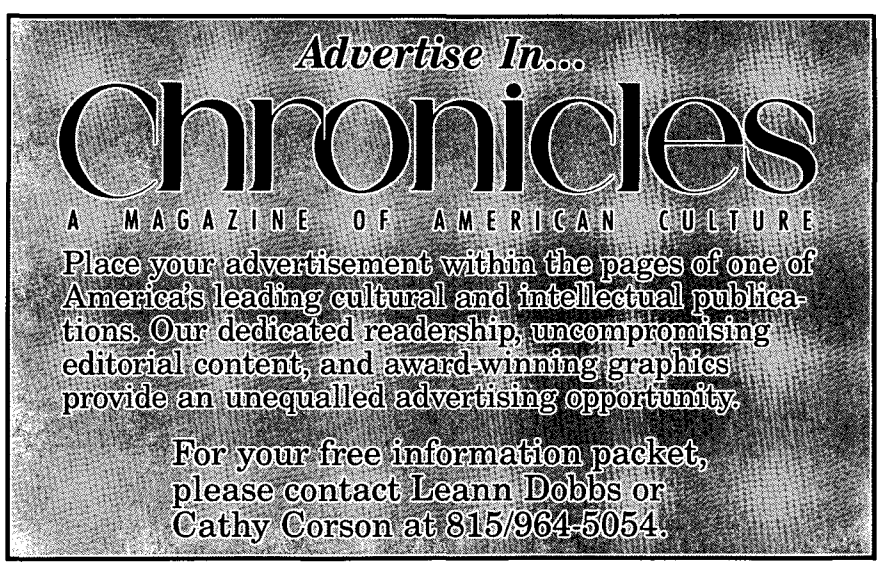
> we are again witnessing the emergence of transnational elites, but now they are composed of international businessmen, scholars, professional men, and public officials. The ties of these new elites cut across national boundaries, their perspectives are not confined by national traditions, and their interests are more functional than national. . . . The creation of the global information grid, facilitating almost continuous intellectual interaction and the pooling of knowledge, will further enhance the present trend toward international professional elites and toward the emergence of a common scientific language. . . . This, however, could create a dangerous gap between them and the politically activated masses, whose "nativism"—exploited by more nationalist political leaders—could work against the "cosmopolitan" elites.

The disengagement of multinational corporations, the defining structures of the "Western" economy, from their host cultures is now obvious and openly acknowledged. In 1989, the president of NCR Corporation remarked that "I was asked the other day about United States competitiveness and I replied that I don't think about it at all. We at NCR think of ourselves as a globally competitive company that happens to be headquartered in the United States."

More recently, even as Operation Desert Storm was saving one Arab non-country from the clutches of another, the *Washington Post* reported that Saudi Arabia's Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud had invested some $590 million in Citicorp, described by the *Post* as "America's largest banking company." That description was subtly corrected by Citicorp's executive vice president, Thomas E. Jones, who announced that "We don't view ourselves as just a U.S. bank. The fact that the guy happens to be Saudi is neither here nor there." It may be neither here nor there to Mr. Jones whether he gets his orders from New York or Riyadh or wherever the prince and his seraglio happen to be taking the waters this week, but it might matter to Americans that decisions about their jobs, living standards, and even their political and cultural future will be settled there—not here.

Not just the corporate elite, of course, but also cultural and political elites are disengaging themselves from their host cultures, which they regard as impediments to their interests and universalist ideology. Such mundane concerns as the "national interest" and loyalties to specific cultural institutions and ways of living (especially if they're "Eurocentric") restrict what the elite can do and compete with the power of the bureaucratic conglomerates in which it is lodged—multinational corporations as well as international organizations, foundations, and "multiversities" where any suggestion of Eurocentric loyalty is severely punished. The goal of the elite is the extirpation of the roots of cultural distinctiveness such as family, community, sexuality, ethnicity, and religious identity and their replacement by a cosmopolitan ethic of "humankind" administered by the elite's own bureaucratic colossi.

All the chest-thumping and horn-blowing by Middle Americans last winter in the wake of the devastation of the Iraqi army may, therefore, have been somewhat misplaced. Every American ought to be relieved that the country won, rather than lost, the war, that the conflict lasted so briefly, and that so few of their countrymen died in it after all. But what really triumphed on the banks of the Euphrates, where some of history's earliest empires were born, was history's latest heir to the imperial purple. The heir is not the American Republic, the American nation, or even a Pax Americana. What was born last winter, to paraphrase Voltaire, was neither Pax nor Americana, but the imperium of a deracinated new class of global technocrats who know little about peace or America and who despise the real American and Western civilization as much as they scorn the Moslem and Arabic cultures that they claimed to be liberating.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## Before

*by Harold McCurdy*

"A great while ago the world begon
with hey, ho, the winde and the raine."
—*Twelfth Night*

Before the pyramids rose, before the cities,
Before the caves of painted horse and deer,
Before the cairns and cromlechs, there was fear
In little lives, and a thousand forgotten pities
Thronging around some silent, leaf-strewn bier.

The history of mankind is a long history
Of grief, and terror balanced against terror,
Of hunting for the lost, of valiant error,
Of consciousness awake to its own mystery,
Stuck, but for love, in mind's self-serving mirror.

History? Well, prehistory! We must scrape
Below the shaped things to begin to know
The depth of human and prehuman woe,
The scurrying through the leaves, the near-escape,
The meteor falling, the earth-shattering blow.

Then, after a while, a long long after a while,
The scribes scratch out some record of an event,
Or man or woman worth a monument,
Or celebrate themselves, till the crammed file
Of history asks to be asked what history meant.

Times pass, and time is passing, while we still
Wait for a clue. Strange happenings occur:
Cordelia dead, and the King weeping for her,
The throne usurped by Regan and Goneril.
Fast, fast, the rumors fly, the spindles whir.

Poised on the warhead of a Titan missile
Exploding in Arkansas, we cast a glance
At Titans of the old time, and the advance
From Then to Now; and whistle, if we can whistle,
The Future up from the darkness we call Chance.



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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

# America Through the Looking Glass

by Thomas Fleming

Not so long ago anticommunist conservatives used to rail against the mirror fallacy, the leftist assumption that the Soviet Union could be studied in Western terms. If only we could strengthen the hand of the doves and "responsible" elements, we could keep the country from falling into the hands of the hard-liners and hawks—the Soviet analogues of Barry Goldwater. After supporting a KGB thug (Andropov) as an urbane, Westernized scotch-drinker, it was inevitable that Gorbachev be seen as the savior not only of his country but of the entire world. All that was left was the Nobel Peace Prize—routinely awarded to butchers and hypocrites (with a joint award to Le Duc Tho and Henry Kissinger, they achieved a double word score). Now that he has the Norwegian medal of infamy, Gorbachev has carte blanche to proceed with his plans, whatever they are, for reconstructing his empire.

But if it is illegitimate to hold up the U.S.S.R to the mirror of the U.S.A, the reverse is still a useful exercise, and by looking at recent events in Eastern Europe, we may be able to learn something about ourselves. To tell the truth, I don't know very much about the Soviet Union. Like most Americans who sound off about global conflict, I don't know Russian, and a writer without an adequate grasp of the language is denied access not only to the newspapers, documents, and conversations that are the stuff of history, but also to the vocabulary of the spirit, the grammar and syntax of the national character.

Many of my conservative friends seem obsessed with all things Soviet in the same way that puritans can be obsessed with sin. There is a political prurience that leads us to gloat loathingly over the crimes of Stalin (or Hitler), as we thank God we Americans are not like other men. And if conservatives are prone to overestimate the crimes of Lenin and Stalin—Atilla the Hun or even Shaka Zulu might have killed as many, if only they had had the means—some of them are just as ready to overvalue the talents and accomplishments of the Russian people. We hear much of Russian "spirituality" and of the magnificence of Russian literature. Solzhenitsyn, before he was unmasked as a religious nationalist and therefore reactionary, was treated by some



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Western writers as an intellectual "heavy dragoon" ("take all the remarkable people in history / rattle them off to a popular tune"): the joint incarnation of Shakespeare and St. John of the Cross, with a little Montesquieu thrown in for seasoning.

Reading Russian literature only in translation, I have failed to discover the qualities that are supposed to elevate it above the other not quite first-rate literatures of modern Europe. From Pushkin to Solzhenitsyn, there may be half a dozen or even a dozen writers who have made an impact on the West, but the same can be said of German and Italian writers in the same period. Russia has produced no Goethe or Dante; no Shakespeare or Cervantes; no Balzac or Baudelaire. I do not wish at all to detract from the accomplishments of Russian fiction, which I continue to read with pleasure; at the same time, I firmly believe that Scott, Thackeray, and Trollope, Balzac, Flaubert, and Stendahl, Hemingway and Faulkner are as good, if not better. I also believe that there have been, writing recently in the United States, more accomplished novelists than Solzhenitsyn.

Ah, but what of the deep Russian soul, the great spirituality of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky? You won't find that in Trollope or Balzac. Exactly. Western novelists have always recognized that fiction is a bourgeois form of art that is concerned mainly with the vicissitudes of social life. Our best fiction is, for the most part, solid and skeptical of excesses. There is nothing more civilized, in our world, than Trollope's investigations of the microcosms of parsonages and Parliament, and there is no better work of social prophecy than his most gloomy novel, *The Way We Live Now*.

There is not a drop of mysticism—or even of real religion—in Trollope, but England and America (to say nothing of France) have produced their share of Christian novelists. That great Christian gentleman, Walter Scott, prayed at church or read the Prayerbook with his family; yet for all his affection for the Scottish peasantry, he did not rush out onto his estate and hug the first yokel he could find or move out into a hovel to discover the wisdom that comes from the soil.

The Russians have had to become "spiritual" as their only means of defense against the tyranny and suffering they have inflicted upon themselves throughout their entire history. Incapable, as a people, of individual responsibility or political liberty, they have had to take refuge in religion or in the mysticisms of race and soil. Their liberals (in the old sense)—such men as Herzen, Turgenev, the elder Nabokov—were driven into exile and despair.

This is not to deny the validity or value of Russian mysticism. Suffering can confer both dignity and wisdom, although it is just as likely to degrade its victims. From this perspective, the Russian variation on our civilization has at least as much to teach us as the Italian, German, and Scandinavian.

Now, especially, that the Russians and their subjects are paying the bills for Lenin and Stalin, we can learn many lessons from their experiences. Perhaps we can only foretell our own future. But as the West falters and stumbles, as the foundations of our culture crack and crumble, eventually bringing the jerry-built political, economic, and social structures down upon our heads, we would do well to take instruction from a nation that has given the world so many men who are experts at inflicting and enduring misery.

It is impossible to do justice to the worst features of the Soviet Empire, but any intelligent outsider reading the newspapers would conclude that the main problems have to do with the creation of a centralized political system that manages a planned economy, the campaign to suppress national identities, and the attempt to establish a new political order, based not on history or tradition, but on ideology and propaganda. These causes, quite apart from other difficulties, would be sufficient to explain the secession movements in the Baltic states and the ethnic conflicts throughout the Union, the chronic food shortages and grotesque inefficiencies of production and distribution, and the helplessness and paralysis of both the people and the local authorities in the face of economic disaster and political disintegration. The most frequently heard cry, at least in the press, is the desire for a strong leader who will restore order, punish the wicked exploiters, and get the system moving again. Oh for the days of Comrade Stalin.

Sensible critics in the West have been saying for years that the Soviet system could not survive, much less prosper. Free market competition for resources and status is an inherent part of human nature, and if individuals are prevented from owning property and advancing their fortunes in farming or commerce through individual initiative and hard work, ambitious natures will find other outlets. "Whatever is the road to power," Burke warned, "that road will be surely trod upon." If Party membership and positions in the *nomenklatura* define status and power, then the best and brightest will gravitate toward those official institutions that offer the best advantages.

Washington, D.C., is full of the healthiest and best-looking young people in America, because in large measure that is where the action is, not just in government, but for all those gigantic business interests whose existence and prosperity depend upon special privileges from government: agribusiness worried about subsidies, communications and entertainment companies eager to retain their monopolies, utilities and other industries anxious to make sure that environmental regulations are all written in their favor.

The corruption of Congress and the wealth and power of lobbyists are only the superficial symbols of an increasingly centralized American economy. While every new technology smashes through the monopolies and cartels that dominate American business, it does not take long for the cartels to harness the technology—air travel, fax machines, 900 numbers—in the service of the great interests. The conspiracy of business, labor, and government that we now call economic planning used to go by its correct name: corporate fascism. America's first major experiment in fascism was Franklin Roosevelt's National Recovery Administration. Senator William Borah correctly perceived that the aim and end result of such planning would be the destruction of small businesses, which he regarded as the backbone of the American republic:

> I look upon the fight for the preservation of the "little man," for the small, independent producer



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> and manufacturer, as a fight for a sound, wholesome, economic national life. . . . It is a fight for clean politics and for free government. When you have destroyed small business, you have destroyed our towns and our country life, and you have guaranteed and made permanent the concentration of economic power. . . . The concentration of wealth always leads, and has always led, to the concentration of political power. Monopoly and bureaucracy are twin whelps from the same kennel.

The NRA was opposed by most honest businessmen, even in large corporations, and in 1935 the Supreme Court declared the act unconstitutional. It did not take long, however, for the great corporations to recognize the benefits of a cozy relationship with government. As Adam Smith among many other champions of the free market observed, businessmen hate competition above all else, and the Morgans, Boeskys, Milkens, and Trumps of this world do not make their money by creating or producing, but by the bribery, blackmail, and manipulation that comprise "the art of the deal."

The cynicism of big business in America can be measured by the support of Eastern coal companies for the Clean Air Act, the contributions to NOW made by manufacturers who like cheap labor, and the general enthusiasm for importing unskilled legal and illegal aliens, regardless of the social, economic, and political costs to the nation as a whole.

The ethnic conflicts in the U.S.S.R and Eastern Europe ought to serve as a warning to the United States. Soviet rulers deliberately drew national and territorial boundaries that made neither historical nor ethnic sense; they also transferred populations: Russians to Lithuania, Volga Germans to Siberia. Stalin's motives were the same as those of ancient tyrants and emperors: suppression of nationalist aspirations. The most obvious lesson for America is that it is difficult if not impossible to create a unified nation-state out of disparate ethnic groups that have a history of conflict. Undeterred by either common sense or the terrible example of Yugoslavia and the U.S.S.R, our own Kremlin has recently imposed a liberalized immigration law that will insure a deepening of ethnic hostilities and the gradual Balkanization of the country.

The government, apparently, is not importing cheap labor fast enough to suit the new globalists. Despite the poor record of assimilation earned by many Soviet emigrants, who are uncomfortable with American freedoms, and despite the FBI's chilling statement that the most violent criminal gangs in America are composed of Russians, the Heritage Foundation is calling for admission of one million additional Russians and proposes to pay for them by "selling" $4.2 billion of Liberty Bonds. This is the polite way of saying borrow $4.2 billion dollars and pay twice that back in principal and interest. Once upon a time we sold "liberty" bonds to finance the defense of America. Now it is to promote the interests of unhappy Russians.

This is affirmative action conservatism with a vengeance, and it comes at a time when the continued centralization of power in the hands of the national government and federal courts is already alienating the various ethnic, religious, and regional minorities. Hispanics, blacks, fundamentalists, and Southerners — to name only a few of the most prominent groups — will eventually have to give up the futile contest for power and privileges at the national level and will turn increasingly to one or another form of separatism. The federal system set up by the Founders served us well, but federalism amounts to little more today than the right to collect state and local taxes under the watchful eye of the central state. For a vast and diverse territory of the size of the United States, there are only two alternatives to federalism, and we shall probably experience both of them in some form in the coming years: imperial tyranny and secession.

Since the 1930's, the national regime has attempted to create *e pluribus unum*, not by the federal system that allows for local and regional diversities, but through various devices invented and developed by nationalists, fascists, and Stalinists: the imperial architecture of Washington, so similar in intent and design to Moscow and Berlin; the rigmarole of flag reverence and pledges of allegiance that would have sickened most of our ancestors as much as the flag desecration that such idolatry inevitably invites; the political indoctrination into "democratic values" that replaced the teaching of history in our schools (facts can get in the way of the "truth" that serves "the national interest"). Symptomatic of the transformation has been the evolution of the President from a limited constitutional executive to an emperor responsible directly to the national will and not answerable to the Congress that represents the authority of the states and localities. The imperial President, who cannot do without a Byzantine retinue of chamberlains, secretaries, counsels, and advisors, can now undertake wars on his own initiative. The ultimate justification, as his agents in the Senate expressed it, was the protection of the President's "credibility" in foreign policy. In a burst of republican candor, Senator Nunn informed Arlen Spectre (in the Senate debate on the two Gulf war resolutions), that he had taken an oath to uphold the Constitution and not to defend the prestige of George Bush. But Senator Nunn has been silenced, and other honest Senators who followed their conscience in opposing the war, notably Fritz Hollings, are now being attacked as traitors in language reminiscent of FDR's attacks on Charles Lindbergh.

No one understood the role of propaganda in the ideological state better than George Orwell. In *Animal Farm* the beasts are constantly terrorized by rumors of the renegade Snowball; the traitor Goldstein plays the Trotsky role in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Both in years and sophistication, we have already gone beyond *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and Americans cannot be loyal to their country unless they are constantly reminded of an arch-enemy that threatens to destroy us: the wicked Kaiser, Hitler, Stalin, Richard Nixon, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Manuel Noriega, Saddam Hussein.

But propaganda takes its toll on a people. The most faithful and patriotic elements begin by swallowing the bait whole, but eventually they become cynical and lazy. In the U.S.S.R. propaganda has done its job all too well, and if there were any responsible groups that could serve as a liberal aristocracy and a nucleus for building the habits and



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institutions of self-government, they have remained in hiding. For all I or most Americans might know, the soundest elements may be loyal military men and Communist Party stalwarts in the bureaucracy—people who show up for work in the morning and know how to take orders. These are the so-called "conservatives" that American journalists are fond of deploring, if only as a convenient way of needling Washington conservatives who insist—all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding—that they are the party of individual liberty. Obedience and unreflecting loyalty are the characteristic virtues of ideologues and party hacks everywhere, whichever C-word they use to identify themselves with.

Perhaps this explains the incredible gullibility displayed by conservative anticommunists who, before the arrival of Gorbachev, never had a good thing to say about any Soviet leader. Even the Committee for the Free World, whose *raison d'être* was the sort of knee-jerk anticommunism (complete with enemies lists) that might have made McCarthy blush, disbanded in a mood of despair-in-victory that has no name but is the opposite of *schadenfreude*.

Now that the American right is part of the establishment, they are prey to the same follies, the same blind faith in progress that used to characterize liberals. They cannot learn the lessons the U.S.S.R. can teach, because they are too busy advocating enterprise zones, voucher plans, increased immigration, minority set-asides, state capitalism, and the New World Order. Inexperienced in the ways of real power, they are pawns in the hands of their latest leader, George Bush, a master politician who makes no secret of his contempt for the conservative movement whose leaders fawn upon him with the guilty sincerity of a puppy that has just made a mess on the rug. Don't listen to their occasional criticism of the President: just look at their calendars or count how many pictures of themselves arm-in-arm with George and Barbara they send out to supporters. Simply put, Washington conservatives and their hero President Bush—in the guise of defending free markets—are now championing the latest version of Roosevelt's NRA, and they are keeping the country on a steady course toward the total state. *Nazdarovje*. ◈

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## The Sistine Chapel

*by Harold McCurdy*

Still under judgment by the God of Light
The Popes at Rome drove Michelangelo
To labor eleven years on ceiling and wall
To tell the terrible story of the Fall
And the more terrible story of Christ's right
Uplifted axe-hand poised for the last blow.

Nowhere is Christ the infant seen; nowhere
The Star in the East, or Wise Men following it;
Nowhere the pitying Christ; nowhere the mild
Helper of weakness, tender to woman and child;
But Power Supreme, too much for flesh to bear,
Even a Vicegerent's of the Infinite.

Within this vault of terror who could breathe
The salt air off the waves Columbus crossed,
Or dream toward freedom in the windy West?
In gnarled sonnets the artist himself confessed
The burden of the dread he bent beneath
Of being for his sins forever lost.



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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

# Jack and Jill, or Why I Am Not a Conservative

**by Andrei Navrozov**

He who has seen the present has seen everything, said Marcus Aurelius, and this is why the floor of my study is made concave by the aggregate weight of all the newspapers and magazines I have acquired since moving to Cambridge: I simply cannot bring myself to throw away a single page of newsprint. In this sense I am a conservative.

Let me reach into the moldering pile. "Our ideas have crossed the front lines and conquered our enemies' consciousness." Is this Enoch Powell, in the *Spectator* of June 25, 1988, hailing the national revival of the Russian Empire? I read on:

> Let us suppose that the Reds only think they are fighting for the glory of the International . . . and in fact are shedding their blood, however unconsciously, for nothing other than the restoration of the Divinely Protected Sovereign State of Russia. . . . If this is the case, it means that the "White idea," having crossed the battlelines, has conquered their subconscious minds. . . . We have triumphed. . . . The White idea has been victorious.

No, this is not Enoch Powell but an intellectual forerunner of his, a Russian monarchist named Vasily Shulgin, writing in 1922. Shulgin was one of the founders of *smenovekhovstvo*, or the "changing landmarks" movement, of which the modern historians Michel Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich say in their *Utopia in Power*:

> The changing landmarks movement arose among the right-wing, conservative sectors of the Russian intelligentsia. Efimovsky was a monarchist, Ustryalov and Klyuchnikov supporters of Kolchak, Shulgin a monarchist, and Gredeskul a right-wing Cadet. They all "changed their landmarks" when they came to the conclusion that the White cause was

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being served by Red hands. The ideologists of this movement were adherents of such conservative thinkers as Konstantin Leontiev and Joseph de Maistre. They accepted bolshevism because the idea of liberty, so crucial to the left-wing intelligentsia, was a secondary matter to them.

"There is no need to be finicky about this," Enoch Powell muses. "People who find it surprising and inconsistent that the Baptists, for instance, have received no obvious benefit from the new climate have failed to understand what is going on." I return the *Spectator* to the moldering pile. My subject is neither the plight of Soviet Baptists, nor "Enoch Powell in Russia," nor expatriate movements of old. It is, quite simply, the will to knowledge.

Mr. Shaw, a carpenter who came to repair a staircase a few years ago, asked me if it would be all right to watch television in our absence. I asked him what it was that he was afraid of missing. It was the Chancellor's budget speech.

The pages of the newspapers that I am conserving in dust and tobacco smoke bulge with the sort of news Mr. Shaw is eager to know as well as understand. Mortgage rates, pensions, union power, 1992, balance of payments, inflation, NHS and a myriad other indices, concepts, or realities comprise his field of interest when he is sober or not working. Even so, he does not take a morning, "quality" paper.

In August 1988, a Gallup survey commissioned by the Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies revealed that only 22 percent of the 171 regular readers of "quality" newspapers polled were aware that the Soviet Union has ballistic missile defenses. It is less important, perhaps, that the subjects of the survey were members of Parliament.

Although the Conservative Party has traditionally been seen as the "party of defence," Tory MPs generally come out worse in the survey than their Labour counterparts. This is alarming, given that nearly a third of the Tories polled claim that defence is their main area of interest.

I throw the front-page *Sunday Telegraph* article back into the pile, noting only that "ninety-eight percent of Conservative MPs indicated their support for the START proposals of 50 percent cuts in strategic systems." My subject is the will to knowledge, I whisper, and I must see these people as newspaper readers like myself, not as political leaders upon whose decisions our sovereignty depends.

The universe of quotidian concerns, which our carpenter and, evidently, even readers of "quality newspapers" inhabit, is complex and perceived as such. The best reflection of this is the level of public debate that frames every one of these concerns, no matter how ostensibly remote, or even spectral, its practical significance. I cannot reach into my Aurelian pile for an example from the business section of the *Times* because this is the part of the paper that I discard on arrival, yet the very existence of such a section—sometimes as extensive as all the other news of the day combined—is indicative of the seriousness with which "quality newspaper readers" regard such concerns.

For a neat contrast, I unfold a recent *Sunday Telegraph* ("START treaty should be ready for signing by the end of the year," promises the front page) and turn to the current op-ed debate: "Hugh Trevor-Roper argues that we should support Lithuanian independence, but not promise more than we can secure," while Geoffrey Wheatcroft writes "on why it's time for appeasement over the Baltic states." Again, it is not the mere fact that the debate, in a Tory "quality newspaper," could just as well be taking place on Soviet television that is so mortifying. It is rather, from the viewpoint of my subject here, that no debate so restricted can be imagined taking place in a Western democracy on an issue of perceived concern, be it the need for a statutory incomes policy or the prospect of legislation against owners of dangerous pets.

When, at the end of March 1988, the 19-member Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate recommended full approval of the INF treaty, the 17-to-2 margin of the vote ensured that legislative review of the "deal" would be little more than a rubber stamp. During the 21 days of committee hearings, the battle against ratification had been waged single-handedly by Jesse Helms, the senator from North Carolina whose political isolation within his own Republican Party has only increased since then. In the end, it was his vote, seconded by North Dakota's Larry Pressler, that kept the committee from being unanimous on the issue. When the full Senate finally voted approval, only two other Republicans and one Democrat dissented.

It is the perception of the INF treaty as politically unstoppable, a "done deal" the moment it had been signed, that caused the dissenters to condemn it, far more than its actual significance as a kind of Maginot Line on paper. In a dry phrase that might have been used by De Gaulle fifty-odd years earlier, General Bernard W. Rogers, former Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, described his country as willing "to sacrifice deterrence on an altar of political expediency." Indeed, the initial announcement of the INF "agreement in principle" was made by President Reagan on the bicentenary of the American Constitution. What had grown "inexpedient," evidently, was the Constitutional mandate "to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

If today's Western electorates, *including* Mr. Shaw, are rarely at the mercy of their elected representatives in matters of domestic policy, foreign policy is as much the preserve of the politicians today as it was in the days of Queen Victoria. In areas like defense, in particular, the gap of accountability is wider than it has ever been, if only because totalitarian societies—whose existence justifies the expenditure in the first place—are a principally new historical phenomenon, one whose *modus operandi* has not had the benefit of centuries of study and discussion.

In his 180-page "Memorandum to Republican Senators on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," which has yet to receive a mention in any British newspaper, Senator Helms attempted to bridge the accountability gap dividing the politicians from their constituencies as follows:

1. We don't know what we are looking for. 2. We don't know where to look for it. 3. If we find it, we



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don't know what we have found. 4. If we figure out what it is, there's nothing we can do about it. In each case, the "it" is an SS-20, the fundamental Soviet system constrained by the treaty.

In other words, the assertion that the INF treaty is enforceable by the American side is as meaningless as the proverbial medieval calculation of the number of angels that can dance on the head of a pin. The analogy is not spurious, as the Soviet RSD-10 (SS-20) missile at the heart of the treaty is as much of a mystery today as it was during the treaty negotiations in Geneva, when the Soviet side refused to provide even a photograph of the weapon. When one was finally provided in Washington on the day the treaty was signed, it transpired that the object depicted bore no resemblance to what the American side had had in mind during the negotiations. Another, better quality, image furnished two weeks later confirmed that neither the proponents nor the opponents of the treaty could have known what an "SS-20" is.

I dwell on this example because the INF treaty is a milestone in the history of the West. Not because never before in history had a peace accord presented such opportunity for unilateral deception, but because not since the Dark Ages had free men given wholehearted credence to postulates that they could not prove by experiment or openly espoused doctrines that they were powerless to oppose.

It is not surprising that a military man like General Rogers should be so sensitive to the notion of expediency, political or any other kind. Military men are expected to understand the essential difference between tactics and strategy, and the risk of confusing the two. Expediency is synonymous with that risk.

The "poisoned pawn" in chess is a textbook example. By taking it to avail himself of a tactical benefit, the player makes a strategic blunder of which he is unaware and loses the game. It is, in fact, impossible to win at chess without the will to knowledge *that is my subject here*, and it is quite clear that its cultivation is what constitutes the game. Strategy is simply another word for the will to knowledge, while tactics — unless ruthlessly subordinated to strategy — is simply another word for wishful thinking.

Many chess-sets sold in shops these days will include a booklet on the game, often containing a dozen standard *conseils pratiques*. I shall cite the first two:

1. Try to make advantageous exchanges (a rook for a knight for instance) as this will make your task easier.
2. When ahead, change off men; when behind, avoid exchanges.

One need not be more than a beginner to understand the universal strategic truth of this advice. If Jack has ten apples while Jill has eleven, it is good strategy for wicked Jill to persuade dumb Jack that they should eat ten apples each, for at the end of the day Jill will have something while Jack will have nothing. I call Jack dumb because he lacks the will to know what will happen at sundown.

I am neither Marcuse in California nor Solzhenitsyn at Harvard, and the will to knowledge of which I now speak is not meant to have ethical, philosophical, or religious overtones. If anything, the emphasis here is on "knowledge" rather than "will," though certainly each aspect of the notion deserves a separate commentary.

The knowledge of Soviet totalitarianism possessed by the West's policymaking establishment is easy enough to assess without recourse to Gallup. I have never met a single appointed or elected government official with a working knowledge of the Russian language, nor can a single journalist on a British or American "quality newspaper" compose a grammatical sentence in Russian. This is roughly equivalent to the inability of a citizen of a democracy — Mr. Shaw or a *Financial Times* reporter — to add together two three-digit numbers. This, I maintain, is a more fundamental index of strategic failure than the total parliamentary ignorance of defense matters.

How can, say, a "Conservative think-tank" develop an insight into the workings of a totalitarian society and communicate it either to the "Tory leadership" or to a "quality newspaper" like the *Telegraph* if no one along the way is capable of reading *Pravda*? A case of the blind leading the blind, as the Gallup poll makes clear, is worrying enough, but before us are the blind who do not so much as suspect that others can see.

On October 4, 1980, according to a small item in *Pravda*, Petr Masherov, First Secretary of Byelorussia, candidate member of the Politburo since 1966 and bearer of seven Orders of Lenin, "tragically perished" in a car accident. Candidate members of the Politburo do not die in car accidents, and the fact that during the ensuing decade no "quality newspaper," "think-tank," or "Tory leader" has remarked on this, a pivotal juncture in modern Soviet history equivalent to Stalin's assassination of Kirov, is emblematic of the ignorance that I seek to establish *a priori*. It can be demonstrated to a native reader of *Pravda* that on October 21, 1980, when the totally obscure provincial named Mikhail Gorbachev became a full member of the Politburo in the ill-fated Masherov's stead, power in the totalitarian oligarchy — for the first time in Soviet history — openly passed into the hands of the secret police apparatus headed by Gorbachev's mentor Yuri Andropov, while the actual transfer had taken place under the ailing Brezhnev several years earlier. But to demonstrate this to the reader of a Western "quality newspaper" is altogether impossible. Thus if Mr. Shaw were unfamiliar with the process of addition he would not have the slightest interest in the Chancellor's report.

I am speaking, then, of the existence of a foreign-policy culture sophisticated enough to bear anything remotely resembling a strategy where totalitarianism is concerned. No such culture has ever existed in the West, in my view, and the chances for its emergence are rapidly diminishing.

Since the autumn of 1917, when the world's first totalitarian society came into being and was perceived as a threat to the future of individual liberty, democracy's response to its strategy of serial deceptions has been one of self-deception. As each new deception was unveiled and launched, usually in the form of an ideological "seed coat" for the permanent aim of global expansion, democracy's political culture proved itself capable of analyzing little more



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than the seed coat's ingredients, and usually after it had already been changed. While Western observers were still reiterating the "changing landmarks" platitudes of *de facto* Soviet agents about the "Reds," lo and behold, "Red Russia" returned to "capitalism." While they talked of the "future of Communism after the death of Lenin," in came Stalin and unveiled a comprehensive program for democracy, complete with a constitution and ballot boxes by the bedside of the infirm. While they talked "Stalin's Constitution," Stalin created Hitler, defeated him, and won half of Europe while preparing to replace "Communism" with — no more and no less — Russian Orthodox Christianity as the ideological seed coat for his future totalitarian empire. How long would they have talked Christianity? Ten years? Twenty years?

Stalin died and they talked "de-Stalinization" instead, even as today they talk the "collapse of Communism." Excellent subjects for discussion: Stalin has been dead for almost forty years, and power has not belonged to the Communist Party in Russia for more than ten.

Historically, totalitarianism's strategy has worked like a human heart. The oligarchy expanded to admit the West in peacetime, creating an appearance of democracy, a simulacrum of economic and political freedom, a sense of openness. Thus it prepared for war, while feigning weakness and paying homage to Western prosperity, wisdom, and other inherent or acquired virtues. Then it contracted into a dictatorship, to expel the West and mobilize for a war of aggression for which internal terror is a prerequisite. This was a *perestroika* — Stalin's favorite word — and then the cycle began anew. The dictatorship expanded into an oligarchy, which it remains today while remaining as totalitarian as it has ever been. It is all but irrelevant that the composition of the current oligarchy is unprecedented; for the secret police apparatus, like the Communist Party, is a world unto itself, and there is no reason to believe that its management of this, the new cycle of Soviet history, will be inferior to that of its predecessor.

In the existing political culture of the West, where a Robert Conquest gets a hearing several decades after a dozen émigré historians publish their identical findings, such axioms are likely to fall on deaf ears. What, then, inhibits the emergence of such a culture today? And is there hope?

I now turn to the other, more problematic aspect of the will to knowledge. Again I begin with an axiom: truth can only emerge in debate, and it is here that the "will" of a democracy finds a practical definition.

Whether in Parliament or in the media, concerned citizens of a democracy can exercise their will. To what end? How can one escape the vicious circle of there being no answers because there are no questions and no questions because there are no answers?

By broadening the debate for the sake of broadening the debate, I reply. Even a person totally ignorant of finance will notice at once if the debate on taxation consists of only two points of view, say, that an Index X should be a function of Alpha or that it should be a function of Beta. A concerned citizen ought to be similarly alerted by the *Telegraph*'s "debate" on Lithuania. He should be skeptical when, year in and year out, he learns from the *Times* that the future of Russia depends on whether "Gorbachev will survive." He ought to smell a rat when two television "commentators" argue about whether the Soviet economy is already a shambles or will be a shambles soon.

Wishful thinking can sustain two opinions, perhaps even three. Feeding on received wisdom, it remains stable so long as the number of equipotent and independent points of view is kept artificially low in the debate that, often without premeditation, it is effectively controlling. Yet all it takes is for five or six individuals — "eccentric" journalists, "maverick" politicians, "irresponsible" men-about-town with access to the media — to raise their voices in defense of the principle of debate, a principle essentially nonpartisan, and a genuine political culture will be in the making.

The traditional polarization of the existing political culture into the "right" and the "left" inhibits genuine debate more than any single factor where the knowledge of totalitarian societies and the will to acquire such knowledge is concerned. The polarization creates an illusion of pluralism, and it is no exaggeration to say, for instance, that, today, the left is pro-Soviet because it is anti-defense (interpreting the "collapse of the Soviet Empire" to justify apparently unilateral disarmament) while the right is pro-Soviet because it is pro-defense (interpreting the "collapse of the Soviet Empire" to justify apparently bilateral disarmament). Now, I ask you: what sort of debate is that?

Let me ask you an even more impertinent question. Why should the concerned citizen, whose existence I accept as given, be convinced that totalitarianism is incapable of developing a strategy of deception, complete with a new ideological seed coat, that would appeal to those traditionally "on the right" just as easily as in the past it developed such strategies to appeal to those traditionally "on the left"? Surely Stalin's secret plans for Orthodox Christianity would have won over Enoch Powell? Surely an industrialist can be enthusiastic about a new market unconstrained by the need for Congressional appropriations approvals and all that red tape? Surely a neoconservative intellectual will find the time for an op-ed piece in *Moscow News*?

The truth, then, cannot be entrusted to anything save debate. It will not dawn on a prime minister or a cabinet member, nor will it mysteriously appear in the hands of the opposition. Two points of view will never ensure that the debate breaks out of the partisan confines, even if these are bipartisan, and only the sound of the third, fourth, or fifth voice can awaken the voting public to set into motion the political process by which the West can arrive at a strategy.

The unchanging aim of totalitarianism is global expansion. Disarmament is the means to achieve that aim.

Jill will try anything to convince Jack. Jack may be an expert on nutrition, conjecturing that Jill's stomach is not up to the task (a "Soviet collapse"), or he may be an international lawyer, determined to persuade her to share the last apple with him (a "common European home"), or he may be a regular optimist, thinking that she has a hole in her pocket and will probably lose it anyway (an "ecological catastrophe"). The fact is, Jack has no strategy.

Jill will try anything to convince Jack. The totalitarian oligarchy, presently in a phase of expansion similar to that of the early 1920's (in 1922, for instance, in Moscow alone



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there were 143 registered private publishing houses and 35 registered periodicals, most of them privately owned), understands full well that only a military deterrent in the hands of nations and individuals is an obstacle to global expansion. The rest is more or less a fiction, and consequently something to which the attention of democracies must be drawn to divert it from the one and only real issue. So Jill may mention to Jack, in passing, her family history of stomach trouble, or the hole in her pocket, or even her generally gullible disposition.

**That even under totalitarian control individuals are likely to misperceive the regime's tactical concessions to them for their own impact upon the regime's strategy is not surprising, since the same misperceptions dominate the pages of the West's 'quality newspapers.'**

The idea that the Soviet oligarchs have "unleashed" a process that they are or will be "unable to control" is an intellectual drama scripted at the Lubyanka. The resilience of the West's reluctance to see it for what it is can be measured by the recent revelations from "former Soviet captive nations" where "popular revolutions" have taken place: although it is gradually being admitted that these had been "engineered by the secret police" from Moscow, no Western observer has questioned the legitimacy of the *status quo* or called into question the earlier interpretations of the *status quo ante*. Thus the *Times* reported recently that, while the "revolutionary" events in Narodni Street in Prague ("561 casualties and one faked death") had been simulated on orders from the KGB deputy chairman, General Grushko, the inevitable conclusion was that "Mr. Havel and the Civic Forum were swept into government by immense public enthusiasm, the beneficiaries of an unlikely plot by their worst enemies." But why are Mr. Havel and the Civic Forum the Soviet oligarchy's "worst enemies," any more than their counterparts in Romania or Hungary are? For the one and only question for the Soviet leadership is: can Mr. Havel, or his counterparts in Romania and Hungary, do anything to develop their nations' military capability to deter Soviet domination? Plainly, at a time when West Germany has proposed to pay for the stationing of Soviet troops on the "unified" nation's soil, the answer is no. And without deterrence there can be nothing that the Soviet oligarchy will be "unable to control."

A nobleman of old was known by his coat of arms. This, in a pre-totalitarian age, represented the eternal truth that honor is the surname of sovereignty. In our totalitarian age, the importance of the individual's privilege to bear arms as a safeguard of his freedom has diminished, although the attention paid by the Soviet leadership to the possession of hunting guns in the "rebel republics" is evidence enough that the significance of this privilege, even today, is not entirely symbolic. At the national level, however, that privilege is the very substance of independence.

No "reform," no "sign of democratization," no "freedom" is too dangerous or too costly for the Soviet leadership to introduce, display, or grant for the sake of disarmament. Nationalist tensions? Here you are. Pornography? Just like Soho. Elections? We are learning. Credit cards, McDonald's, environmental activism, rock music, Christianity? Say the word. Vietnam? Afghanistan? A free press? Of course.

It is a simulacrum difficult to expose. For instance, no report in the new, "free press" in Russia has ever suggested that the Soviet victory in Afghanistan has been the result of one of the most sophisticated, innovative, and efficient operations in the history of modern warfare. But has any report in the good old free press here ever suggested this? Officially, the Soviet Army calls it a withdrawal. The "new press" in Russia calls it a senseless bloodbath. The West calls it a military fiasco. Everyone is pleased, except perhaps the *mujahadeen*.

The term "Finlandization" was once a nasty, Cold War word. It was something that would happen to Jack unless he watched out: count your apples, Jack. Now the specter of Finlandization has become a lure, as the scarecrow of old has been dressed up in the finery of a window mannequin. Jack is expected to look at Finland, or a new Finland like the future Germany, and be reassured. Don't bother counting the apples, Jack. For however useful it is to simulate "Western" virtues and vices on Soviet territory, it is more useful still to simulate them where they already exist.

It is only when the process of Finlandization is irreversible, and Jack has no apples left, that the stark realities of lost sovereignty will come to the fore. The remaining, last apple will make all the difference as the totalitarian oligarchy contracts into a totalitarian dictatorship: Hitler's and Stalin's dream of an empire spanning all of Eurasia, multiplying the Western industrial base by Soviet resources, will come true. It will be a nightmare.

Even here dumb Jack has something to say, especially if he read history at Oxford. Did not Greece and Rome fall in their day, he will muse, and yet the barbarian victors came to be civilized by the vanquished?

I very much doubt that Mr. Shaw, faced with the prospect of ruinous Labour taxation, would muse about such things. The hundred-year-old cliché of a paradox is, practically speaking, yet another damnable fiction.

Totalitarianism is a uniquely modern and, as I have already said, largely unstudied phenomenon. It is made uniquely modern by the power of science and technology harnessed by an oligarchy skilled in its use. By "science" I mean not only nuclear physics, but sociology and psychology. By "technology" I mean not only the production of tanks, but the development of the means of surveillance.

The individual's relationship to that power, seen as a kind of ratio, is infinitesimally insignificant, and this excludes all possibilities of secret organization, clandestine communication, and meaningful dissent. Every expression of discontent, no matter how "threatening," can take place only to the extent it is permitted to take place in accordance with the regime's strategic aims. That even under totalitarian control



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individuals are likely to misperceive the regime's tactical concessions to them for their own impact upon the regime's strategy is not surprising, since the same misperceptions dominate the pages of the West's "quality newspapers" in the absence of such control. In rare cases, the control is taken for granted, as for instance in the pages of Sergei Grigoryants' dissident magazine *Glasnost*, though it is doubtful that a Grigoryants will retain his skepticism if, say, treated by the regime as a Sakharov. The only incorruptible saint is a martyr, and martyrs are rare even among saints.

Thus totalitarianism is assured of victory. To misconstrue an English proverb, "A watched pot never boils." And if it should boil, as it did in Hungary in 1956, all one need do is turn down the heat. It is no coincidence that the Hungarian experiment was the work of Yuri Andropov: far from being demoted and punished for the laboratory accident, he was wisely promoted for his contribution to applied sociology, and rose to become the head of the new oligarchy that rules Hungary today. Certainly without his other famous experiment, in Czechoslovakia in 1968, his successors might have made mistakes in Narodni Street.

As for the prospective "civilization" of the victor by the vanquished, this is, I repeat, the ultimate illusion. "Modern Germany," Orwell observed in 1941, "is far more scientific than England, and far more barbarous." Today, ultramodern science and technology "in the service of ideas appropriate to the Stone Age" are joined, in the hands of totalitarian oligarchs, by culture—in the broadest, most comprehensive sense—in the service of the same ideas. Foreign languages, theology, literature, all play their part in the grand strategic design.

"What falls off the cart," says a Russian proverb, "is lost forever." Once Western Europe has followed Central and Eastern Europe in surrendering the sovereignty that can only be ensured and upheld by the force of arms, it will never be able to climb back onto the cart of democracy. *Never* is a vague word, and perhaps I should say *for millennia*.

Orwell, an English Socialist, was and remains the subtlest political thinker the West has produced in our century. Listen to him in 1940:

> The English can probably not be bullied into surrender, but they might quite easily be bored, cajoled or cheated into it, provided that, as at Munich, they did not know that they were surrendering. It could happen most easily when the war seemed to be going well rather than badly. The threatening tone of so much of German and Italian propaganda is a psychological mistake.

"With the general public," Orwell concludes, "the proper approach would be 'Let's call it a draw.'"

I am re-reading *The Lion and the Unicorn* as the *Times* reports from Washington on a U.S.-Soviet "agreement in principle" to sign a long-range nuclear missile accord, ushering in an "irreversible period of peace." Substitute the West as a whole for the English, "Soviet and East European" for "German and Italian," and the new Munich is before us, surpassing Orwell's prediction in subtlety as well as effectiveness. In the same essay:

> Perhaps England needs tanks, but perhaps it pays better to manufacture motor cars. To prevent war material from reaching the enemy is common sense, but to sell in the highest market is a business duty. Right at the end of August 1939 the British dealers were tumbling over one another in their eagerness to sell Germany tin, rubber, copper, and shellac.

In August 1939, however, totalitarianism in both Berlin and Moscow was avowedly "socialist" or "communist." How much louder the tumbling when it jettisons such ideologies, misperceived in the West as its essence, and welcomes the dealers with open arms!

Orwell was an English Socialist because he did not want to see his country sold down the river. Such idealism is not incompatible with genius.

"No one is more of a slave," said Goethe, "than he who imagines himself free without being so." The tragedy of freedom—not in a new, improved sense, but in its original meaning of absolute sovereignty of the individual—is that the blinding truth of this Romantic vision is finding fewer and fewer adherents. Thus those in the West who imagine Soviet slaves of today, or Chinese slaves before June 4, 1989, as more free than they had been under Stalin or Mao are themselves slaves.

The above paragraph is from an article that appeared in a "quality newspaper." It ran on the literary page, a book by a Soviet "*perestroika* activist" its modest *raison d'être*. I deeply believe that had it, or other forays into the subject by "adherents" of what, in the final analysis, is the will to knowledge, appeared on the editorial and op-ed pages of our "quality newspapers," a point of departure for a common strategy would begin to emerge. To provoke the West into a truly pluralist debate on the subject must become the daily and nightly aim of those who would wish to see this happen.

They must disabuse themselves of partisan, party-political, establishmentarian fictions: Goethe was no more of a Tory than Orwell. To broaden debate must be their sole concern, so that a Goethe or an Orwell may be heard. Dr. David Owen has recently managed to creep into the debate, in a "tabloid newspaper," with the statement that "what we have witnessed in Moscow over the last decade is a transfer of power from the Communist Party to the KGB." This single sentence is worth more than all the verbiage of Downing Street. The former Communist and Red Clydesider Jimmy Reid has exposed the secret links between Moscow and the Solidarity Movement, in last year's Scottish Television program "Reid About Poland." That single broadcast is more welcome than the Tory allegiance of the *Telegraph*. Dr. Owen and Mr. Reid have motives of their own, no doubt, for contradicting the Tory establishment. But those who would exclude them from "serious discussion" are marginalizing nothing short of the chance for their own survival in a free world.

Broaden the debate, Jack. "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: and a people who mean to be their own governours, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." No one remembers if James Madison was a good conservative. I am not, and hope to be remembered as such. For argument's sake at least. ◇



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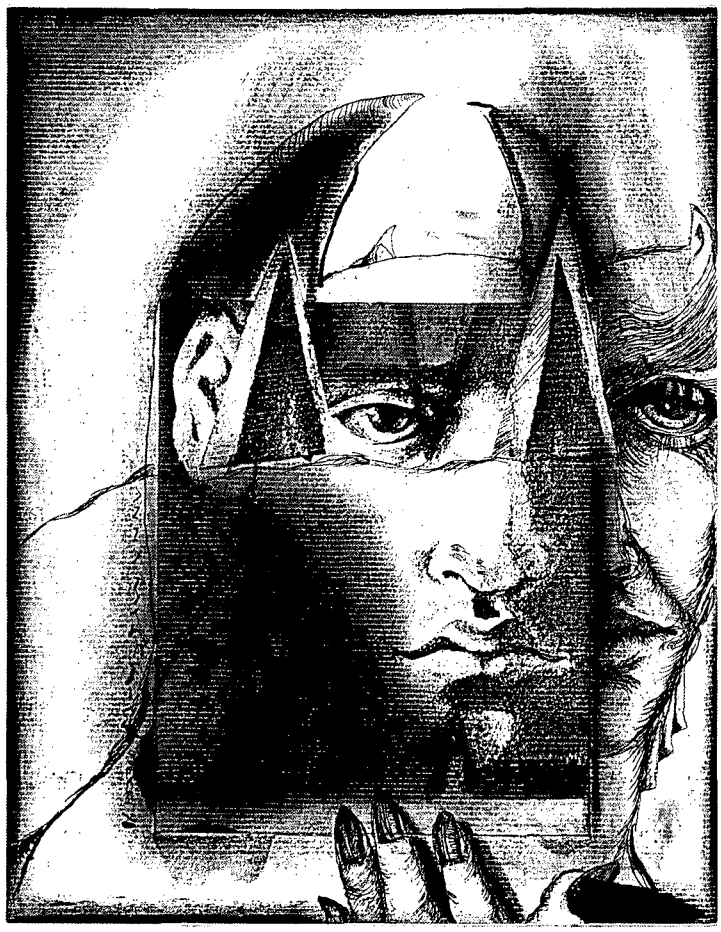
# Gorbachev and the Market

by Yuri N. Maltsev



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

No doubt Gorbachev has been entirely misunderstood in the West, and continues to be. The primary myth is that *glasnost* and *perestroika* represented fundamental change from the Soviet past. They did not establish Western-style economic or political freedom, as the media led Americans to believe. Instead, each was designed to "improve and perfect" the workings of socialism. "I've been told more than once that it is time to stop swearing allegiance to socialism," Gorbachev said recently. "Why should I? Socialism is my deep conviction, and I will promote it as long as I can talk and work."

Gorbachev has always been an adherent of communist ideology. Despite seeing firsthand the malnutrition and even starvation caused by socialism, and despite the murder of his grandfather by Stalin's men, he chose politics as his life's work.

In the Communist Party, as in a mafia family, clawing your way to the top requires many demonstrations of loyalty, sometimes involving murder, and Gorbachev performed well. He thinks like a Communist: issue orders and demand obedience. The only sense in which Gorbachev is different from his predecessors is that he is smoother.

Contrary to myth, Gorbachev has systematically demolished what little market activity existed in the Soviet Union. First he waged an anti-alcohol campaign, where everybody with alcohol on his breath was taken to the police station and 90 percent of liquor stores were closed. The result was a boom in moonshine production that ended up poisoning as many as 55,000 people. Second, he waged a campaign against "dishonest income" that empowered party bureaucrats to bulldoze thousands of private gardens, shutdown farmers' markets, and crack down on unofficial transportation. Third, he campaigned for "labor discipline," in which people absent or late from work were sacked and the streets were patrolled for people stepping out of line. Fourth, he campaigned for "quality" and hired 150,000 bureaucrats to oversee the state enterprises, which resulted in more opportunities for bureaucrats to extract bribes.

Only then did his trumpeted move to the market take place. But it went the way of other "reforms" and ended up not creating a market at all, but only more state enterprises. There was no talk about private property and real buying and selling. Today, the KGB has been put in charge of

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enforcing the command economy.

Gorbachev received the Nobel Prize for events in Eastern Europe, which were real, but unintended from Gorbachev's standpoint. His strategy was to replace shaky Communists with younger ones like himself whom he assumed would be more popular and more capable of saving socialism. Unfortunately for him, the KGB did not tell him just how vulnerable the entire communist system was. Thus Eastern Europe became free despite Gorbachev, not because of him.

Eastern Europe is not, of course, entirely free from socialism (neither is the West), and the reforms may not produce anything but social democracies. But they are free from Soviet domination and that is cause for celebration. Rumors about Soviet influence in reformist movements in Poland or elsewhere should be taken with a grain of salt. Even if such influence were present, I doubt that it could amount to much in a practical sense. Eastern Europe has left the Soviet orbit.

Some conservatives in this country too often assume that the Soviet state, despite its domestic failures, has more ability to exert international influence than it really has. Economic law has imposed restrictions on the Soviets' attempt to substitute chaotic central planning for the rationality of the market. The attempt can only lead to impoverishment, and the Soviets offer the best example I know. Socialism not only destroys capacity for producing consumer goods; it also does the same for military goods and empire generally.

Few dispute that Soviet ideology originally included a desire for world empire. Most tyrannical governments desire empire. But having that as a goal, and having the means to carry it out, are two different things. Socialism, because it eliminates market prices, has the critical flaw of being incapable of putting sausage on the table; it certainly cannot be the basis of world domination. Moreover, the inherent limitations to global empire are not restricted to socialist regimes; they limit all regimes. The world order is far too complex for one nation to successfully control it, as George Kennan has pointed out. One government can bribe other governments and even bomb them, but it cannot forever determine others' domestic activities and their relations with other countries.

Today, the Soviets have turned their attention away from foreign affairs, not because they want to, but because they have to for the sake of their own survival. This fact doesn't make the regime or communism any less condemnable. But it should mitigate the desire of the West to try to counter dying or even nonexistent international Soviet influence. It was not Reagan's military buildup, but the failures of socialism, that led to Gorbachev's humility in foreign affairs. The need for a bail out will often do that.

The proper American response to Soviet foreign policy should be to encourage the breakup of the Soviet Union itself, which neither Gorbachev nor Bush want. We certainly should not be sending money and food to the Communist Party and its KGB allies, as George Bush has done.

The leaders of most Soviet republics have proven themselves quite responsible and capable of carrying on peaceful relations. A breakup of the Soviet Union would also increase the chances for demilitarization. By refusing the republics' demands for independence, Gorbachev is actually increasing the chances of civil war. He is also threatening world peace.

What does the future hold? Just about anything can happen. If Gorbachev consolidates the Stalinist system, that system can only survive with an external threat, real or imaginary, and that threat could be the United States. Already, for example, *Pravda* has accused Yeltsin of being a CIA agent. But another U.S. military buildup would only provide an excuse for the most reactionary elements of the party and the military to take over.

It is true that the Soviets still hold 11,000 nuclear warheads (some say 16,000, or maybe even 30,000), which, they say, means they could destroy us in ten minutes. If that's so, I don't know what the United States can do about it. Moreover, there are plenty of questions about the reliability of Soviet military strength. Soviet-made weapons certainly did not put on an impressive display in the Gulf war, and the technological rot probably runs deeper. During 1981, the Soviets test-fired 86 ICBMs. Only 13 hit the target; 27 blew up in the silos. Even the Soviets admitted that it was a disaster. In the event of a nuclear exchange, the residents of Moscow may have more to fear from their own weaponry than from that of the United States.

Most importantly, the United States should not use the opportunity of Soviet weakness as an excuse to attempt to run its own world empire. The attempt will bankrupt America and cause the growth of Soviet-style government here. ◈


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# Willing Belief

## In Gorbachev, in Russia, in Reform

**by Arnold Beichman**

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

William James was much concerned about "faith-tendencies," which he defined as "extremely active psychological forces, constantly outstripping evidence." The Gorbachev era fully confirms his apprehensions. The eminent psychologist even constructed a seven-rung "faith-ladder":

1. There is nothing absurd in a certain view of the world being true, nothing self-contradictory;
2. It *might* have been true under certain conditions;
3. It *may* be true, even now;
4. It is *fit* to be true;
5. It *ought* to be true;
6. It *must* be true;
7. It *shall* be true; at any rate for me.

James' faith-ladder has never been more in evidence than over the last six years since Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union. True, there has been a bit more caution in the West about Gorbachev than there was about Stalin. But not very much.

The "faith-tendencies" that troubled James reached the zaniest heights on the *New York Times* editorial page. In a piece of prose that might even embarrass a *Pravda* paranymph, the *Times* wrote on December 8, 1988, in praise of a Gorbachev speech at the United Nations:

> Perhaps not since Woodrow Wilson presented his fourteen points in 1918 or since Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill promulgated the Atlantic Charter in 1941 has a world figure demonstrated the vision Mikhail Gorbachev displayed yesterday at the United Nations . . . Breath-taking. Risky. Bold. Naive. Diversionary. Heroic. All fit.

And as if that wasn't worshipful enough, the *Times* rhapsodized on May 21, 1989:

> Imagine that an alien spaceship approached Earth and sent the message: "Take me to your leader." Who would that be? Without doubt, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev.

Well, you sort of expect that sort of wilding on the *Times* editorial page. (Have you read Anna Quindlen, the newest *Times* columnist, on the second war of the Persian Gulf?) One expects Ted Turner to say: "Gorbachev has probably moved more quickly than any person in the history of the world. Moving faster than Jesus Christ did. America is

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*Arnold Beichman is a Hoover Institution research fellow. His book* The Long Pretense: Soviet Treaty Diplomacy From Lenin to Gorbachev *has just been published by Transaction Publishers.*



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always lagging six months behind." But far more sensible people also developed a faith, if not in Gorbachev himself, then in his reformist intentions.

At a time when the Soviet economy is dead in the water, when a majority of its republics are seeking their freedom from the Kremlin, former Prime Minister Thatcher told a Washington audience on March 8:

> We should not underestimate the future reforming zeal of a man who allowed Eastern Europe to grasp its freedom; who has begun the withdrawal of Soviet troops, accepted arms reduction for the first time; and cut support for communist insurgencies across the world. We have to go on doing business with him. In the same way, he has to do business with the democratic reformers if he is to succeed.
>
> Second, we have to stress to the Soviets just how essential private property is to freedom. History teaches that human rights will not long survive without property rights; nor will prosperity be achieved without them.

To say that nothing has changed in the Soviet Union would be false. But to say that the fundamentals of Soviet power have changed would be equally false. There can be no question that the Soviet Union is today an amazingly different country — and for the better — than it was in 1985. Few predicted German unification. Few predicted as much freedom of emigration or speech or press as was the case until recently when Gorbachev ordered a crackdown. Few predicted that the Soviet leadership would seek some genuine legitimacy for its monolithic rule as Gorbachev did through the recently concluded national referendum. Yet we now see that Gorbachev's "reforming zeal" is ebbing fast as the KGB, the military, the party bureaucracy reassert themselves to prevent what would to those pillars of power be the ultimate blow — the dissolution of the Soviet system of rule. Without that dissolution, either Gorbachev's "reforming zeal" will come to an untimely end or, equally likely, Gorbachev himself will.

Annelise Anderson, a sharp-eyed economist and a Hoover colleague with whom I am normally in agreement, recently published in the *Christian Science Monitor* an op-ed piece that the paper titled: "*Perestroika*: An Obituary." Her theme was that the passing of *perestroika* represented "an opportunity to reflect on a life." But that's just the point. While *glasnost* did have some life (because, as we are seeing, it is reversible), *perestroika* had none. Had Gorbachev provided an equivalent break with the past economically as he seemed to be doing politically, the Soviet Union might by now have been on the road to long-term recovery. To break with the Soviet economic past means giving up Marxism-Leninism. That faith, Gorbachev has said over and over again, he will not surrender. So long as Gorbachev acts as a Communist, as a Marxist-Leninist, *perestroika* is a buzzword. Therefore, an obituary for *perestroika* is an obituary for a phantom.

What Mrs. Thatcher, Mrs. Anderson, the *New York Times*, and Ted Turner do not face is that there is no way Gorbachev's "reforming zeal" can turn a system with a record of seven decades of failure — socially, intellectually, environmentally, economically, politically — into an achieving society. All the tricks, the speeches, the "going down to the people" stunts, the summits, the easing of political burdens, *glasnost*, *perestroika*, the dog and pony shows — have served to demonstrate the unworkability of the Soviet system even under the Gorbachevian best of circumstances. As chess champion Gary Kasparov put it recently: "There is no good move in a lost match."

Why such pessimism? (Or — realism?) Simply this: where no rule of law exists, private property rights cannot exist. A rule of law cannot exist when the state and the party, through the KGB, can invoke the most severe penalties against those citizens who, according to the KGB and the non-independent judiciary, violate the "laws" against revealing state secrets. Since the KGB defines the state secrets, the definitions can include restrictions on personal freedoms such as the freedom to publish or the freedom to buy, sell, and own property. A rule of law and a KGB are irreconcilable. The rule of law and the rule of Gorbachev are incompatible; he has not come to power in a democratic election, referendum or no. The Gorbachev propagandists have talked about establishing a rule of law, but it is all smoke and mirrors. Under a Marxist-Leninist system there simply cannot be a rule of law, a constitutional system. Therefore, no inalienable rights are possible.

Can anybody sue the Soviet government for its promulgation of the Soviet currency "reform" that made illegal notes of 50 rubles or higher? Can anybody get an injunction to restrain the Soviet dictatorship from robbing ordinary citizens of their savings? Where is the privatization of agriculture? Where are the promised innovations in industry? As Hilaire Belloc once wrote: "The control of the production of wealth is the control of human life itself."

Some months ago the Soviet literary weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta* reported that its legal expert, Arkadii Vaksberg, had stated that "our state has not been lawful in the true sense of the word for a single day in the whole history of its existence." It cannot be a lawful state where a small group of men, in the name of "central planning," decide on the allocation of scarce resources, especially investment; dictate prices regardless of cost accounting; exercise a kind of ecological despotism; ignore the sanctity of contracts; and reject privatization — where there is no accountability to elected legislative or provincial bodies empowered to alter the direction of a failed economy. What passes or has passed for *perestroika* is the old system with a snazzy maquillage, but food and now even bread lines tell the true story: socialism/communism (or central planning) and liberty cannot coexist.

The only true *perestroika* must be anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist, anti-Stalinist, and anti-Gorbachevist. Gorbachev says over and over again that he is a Marxist-Leninist, but victims of "faith-tendencies" pay no attention. Gorbachev is well-described in something Leo Tolstoy wrote at the turn of the century:

> I am sitting on a man's back, choking him and demanding that he carry me, and without getting off him, I assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to alleviate his condition by all possible means except by getting off his back.



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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

# Visions and Revisions

by Alan J. Levine

*"A morsel of genuine history is a thing so rare as to be always valuable."*
—Thomas Jefferson

**The Duel, 10 May-31 July 1940: The Eighty-Day Struggle Between Churchill and Hitler**
*by John Lukacs*
*New York: Ticknor and Fields; 224 pp., $19.95*

◆

In his latest book, John Lukacs returns to some of the same territory that he covered in one of his finest works, *The Last European War*. Here he has concentrated on the critical period in which the Nazis conquered Western Europe and in which the fortunes of the Allies reached their nadir, but in which Britain's opposition to Hitler crystallized. In a way, this is a prehistory of the Battle of Britain. Lukacs, with his usual stress on the role of personality, interprets this period as a conflict between Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler: "On that duel in May, June, July depended the Second World War and the fate of the world thereafter." Even those most strongly opposed to writing history as the story of the deeds of great men will be unable to deny that there is plenty of justification for such an approach in this case. The result is one of Lukacs' better books; although not free of the erratic and even bizarre judgments that have too often marred his work, *The Duel* is instructive and enjoyable.

The interpretative framework of *The Duel* will be familiar to those who have read Lukacs' earlier books. Lukacs insists upon the primacy of ideas, of individual leaders, and of national characteristics and conflict. The World Wars—not the Russian and Chinese revolutions, decolonization, the division of Europe, or the development of nuclear energy—are, he insists, the crucial events of our century; while nationalism and national conflict, not class conflict, is the crucial motor of modern history. As a broad generalization, Lukacs' view is undoubtedly correct, although the shades of Nicholas II and Jiang Jieshi, among others, might be inclined to suggest that there have been important exceptions. Hitler, who concocted the deadliest synthesis of nationalism and socialism, was the greatest revolutionary of the century, and a generic "national socialism," even if not in its most obnoxious form, survived the Second World War and remains a major force.

While Hitler was a nationalist and a radical, Churchill was a patriot and a traditionalist—even, Lukacs says, a "reactionary." This last description is a bit hard to swallow, for, as Lukacs admits, he was also a democrat; and, early in his career, something of a

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reformer. But Lukacs writes of Churchill with real understanding and a warm sympathy, as he does of the British and West European milieu in which Churchill worked. He reminds us that Churchill, for much of the 20's and 30's, was generally regarded as a has-been and widely distrusted as a maverick, or even a nut. His few admirers and supporters were an equally unpopular fringe element.

After all, it was not merely Churchill's individual stands, but their combinations, which were strange. He was a free trader in a protectionist party and era, a strong supporter of the Empire in an age of retreat when even many Englishmen were starting to see Gandhi as a saint (an illusion, incidentally, that Lukacs deftly explodes by quoting Gandhi's very strange view of Hitler). Churchill was a pro-Zionist when almost all other supporters of a strong imperial role were ardent Arabophiles. Above all, of course, he distrusted (he did not hate) the Germans—not just the Nazis—and he correctly read Hitler when most of the British were sunk in regrets over the First World War and self-delusion about Nazi Germany. Just how isolated he was, Lukacs notes, was understood by Churchill himself: "If one were dependent on the people who had been right in the last few years, what a tiny handful one would have to depend on."

Many Conservatives continued to distrust Churchill's judgment, and the resulting shenanigans in the Cabinet, most importantly Lord Halifax's attempt to seek "acceptable" peace terms through Mussolini, are well-chronicled. Lukacs' account of this and of the congealing of British resistance and the realization of people on the Continent that Hitler had not, after all, been completely victorious are the best parts of the book. Although it seems clear that the minimum demands even Halifax insisted on would never have been granted by Hitler, an approach of this sort might have ruined British morale. But in the black period of Dunkirk, not even Churchill could simply reject it. And Lukacs tends to support suggestions that Churchill used Sir David Kelly, the British minister to Switzerland, in an attempt to lead the Germans to think that Britain might just make peace in the hope of delaying their preparations for an attack on Britain. Churchill himself dangerously invited Lloyd George, a super-appeaser far more extreme than Neville Chamberlain or Lord Halifax, to join the Cabinet, perhaps calculating that, if he were toppled, it would be better if Lloyd George replaced him than Oswald Mosley. Fortunately, the Welsh demagogue did not take up the offer. It was not one of Churchill's better ideas; somewhat similar miscalculations led the French Prime Minister, Paul Reynaud, to prefer Philippe Pétain to Camille Chautemps, with disastrous results.

Lukacs' analysis of Hitler's aims and decisions is not up to his treatment of Churchill. He portrays the Nazi tyrant as altogether too normal, too unemotional. "What was frightening in his character was his cold and almost inhuman detachment." While it is true that the stories of Hitler's frothing at the mouth and chewing the rug are false—they are transplants from General Ludendorff's behavior in 1918—the Führer was nevertheless a highly emotional man given to memorable rages. More serious is Lukacs' surprising dismissal of Hitler's ideological consistency and minimizing of his aims; although he is never entirely clear about what Hitler *did* want, he goes so far as to allege that, "What Hitler's ultimate war aims were we do not know," and elsewhere concedes that Hitler did consistently seek domination over Eastern Europe. At one point, Lukacs says, "Hitler did not want to conquer the world. He knew that he could not achieve that. The world was too large for one nation to control. That—and not only his half-baked respect for British imperialism—was the main reason for the grand design of his offer for a settlement: America for the Americans, Europe dominated by the Third Reich, the British Empire largely untouched." In any case, Hitler had no aims in the Americas, and in 1940 was solely interested in dealing with Britain's resistance. However, many historians—notably Gerhard Weinberg, Andreas Hillgruber, and Norman Rich—have shown the untenability of these propositions.

Possibly most exasperating, however, is Lukacs' treatment of the story on the American side of the Atlantic. By omission, perhaps, he implies that FDR was far colder toward the Allied cause and slower to back Churchill than he really was. Curiously, while understating the legal difficulties and active opposition that delayed the famous Destroyer-for-Bases deal, Lukacs is unable to portray the isolationist opposition with any fairness or even any sense of reality; a failure that is related, I think, to the contempt for American conservatives frequently expressed in his other books. Lukacs remarks that the main element in appeasement, in Europe, was "not cowardice but an insufficiency of vision." Curiously, this reasonable, albeit over-generous, attitude toward European appeasers is not replicated in his view of American isolationists, though (given their distance from Hitler) their follies would seem to be a bit more defensible. Lukacs' version of isolationism is as follows: "consistent isolationists were few and far between. Most isolationists, bitter opponents of Roosevelt and his administration, were not opposed to armaments and the military. What they opposed was *this*


GENDER ISSUES QUIZ

*Are Conservatives smarter than Liberals?*

What do prehistoric "families," housing projects and barnyards have in common? Chaos! caused by absence of the *social contract* between males and females.

What is the *social contract*?

*It is the delineation of inter-family rights and* responsibilities, whereby a woman is assured by a man of protection and sustenance, in return for legitimate, inalienable children. This is the foundation of civilization.

What went wrong in modern times?' Government negated the contract. Divorce courts routinely evict and pauperize fathers, the welfare empire seeks to replace them. *Other examples of this prejudice are double* criminal standards, e.g. the right to kill husbands, and affirmative action job schemes.

What consequence is father-absence? Deprived of paternal discipline and self-sufficiency, children almost invariably fall into delinquency and dependancy.

Are liberals or conservatives to blame? Both; liberals from consistent principle, conservatives from disregarding the *social contract*, often influenced by perverted chivalry. But, having more commonsense, the latter may be more educable.

What conservative group promotes this sensible perspective on gender issues? The MEN'S RIGHTS ASSOCIATION 17854 - C Lyons, Forest Lake, MN 55025

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war; the war waged by the aged and corrupt British and French empires against Germany and the inclination of Roosevelt and others to side with the former. A very frequent element in this kind of thinking was anti-Communism." Lukacs notes that Joseph P. Kennedy's so-called isolationism, in particular, was based on his anticommunism.

There are more errors, here, than can be analyzed properly in a short space. Lukacs' picture of the isolationists smacks not of the actual record of 1940-41 but of the rationalizations some diehard opponents of American intervention offered *after* the war. In fact, many isolationists were liberals; and what united isolationists—liberal, conservative and socialist—was not hostility to Britain or sympathy for Germany (which was nearly nonexistent), but the view that with a modicum of investment in defense the United States could hold the Western hemisphere against any attack from the Old World, and could in the last resort afford to ignore what happened in Europe and Asia. It was precisely the fact that few believed this after 1945 that forced diehard anti-interventionists to indulge in fantasies that, if only for Roosevelt, there would have been no Soviet threat. But anticommunism

was hardly an issue in 1940-41—the isolationists and the American Communists were on the same side in opposing American intervention. No doubt isolationists, or at least the conservative ones, were subjectively anticommunist; but they shared the common belief that the Soviet Union was a weak state and that it would be quickly overwhelmed by the Nazis. They did not see it as a threat the way people did during the Cold War.

Moreover, many isolationists were quite consistent and remained opposed to any sort of active foreign policy after World War II, although in this case consistency cannot be considered a virtue. Joe Kennedy was a particularly good—or, rather, a particularly awful—example of this: in 1950 that despicable man advocated abandoning Western Europe to Stalin, an odd position for one supposedly motivated by anticommunism. Lukacs' tirades against American isolationists are particularly strange since he himself does not seem to believe that Hitler presented a clear and definite threat to the United States. He is in the uncomfortable position of a man who shares one of the isolationists' premises but objects to their deductions from it. Fortunately, his thinking on this point does not ruin an otherwise interesting and useful book. ◁


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# Cleaning Up

by Matthew Scully

*"To write a criticism of one's self would be an embarrassing, even an impossible task."*
—Heinrich Heine

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

**Breaking Barriers: A Memoir**
*by Carl T. Rowan*
*New York: Little, Brown;*
*395 pp., $22.95*

◆

This autobiography pretty much confirms the impression left by an occasional reading of Carl Rowan's columns over the years: a decent enough fellow, earnest but smug, amiable at times but given to portentous and endless scoldings about "hidden racism," the lean civil rights champion turned puffed-up panel discussion bore.

To begin with the better part of *Breaking Barriers: A Memoir*, Mr. Rowan's story runs like this. The future award-winning reporter, ambassador, and pundit was born in McMinnville, Tennessee, to a loyal and brave mother and a layabout father who seems to have squandered the few chances life gave him. Jobs were few, but even when he did earn some money stacking lumber or cleaning stables, the old man gambled much of it away.

"'Boy, we're gonna have a good dinner tonight, 'cause I just won eighteen dollars,'" he'd say after his more successful ventures at the poker table. But, recalls Mr. Rowan, "My mother always believed that if he said he had won eighteen dollars, he really had won twenty-eight dollars or more. So she would go through his pockets at night. And the happiness of 'a good dinner' would deteriorate into another brawl." It continued like this throughout Mr. Rowan's boyhood: a shanty home, endless quarreling, scrounging for food, rats, bedbugs, one slight or humiliation after another.

And there was "no road of escape," he writes. "Every time I read the arrogant opinion of some white male about the weaknesses and sins of black men, I think back to the 1930's and to a father who was a damned smart guy, except that he had been denied formal education and had no way to become a 'good provider.'"

If there is more anger in that pronouncement than hard reason, we can certainly forgive this in a man who, growing up poor in a segregated town, awakened in childhood either to bitter parental shouting or the squealing of large rats. But sins and weaknesses are sins and weaknesses, no matter what the advantage of "some white male" who points them out—and who must struggle with sins and weaknesses of his own. In any case, young Mr. Rowan himself got a few rare breaks, chiefly in the form of a wise teacher, Mrs. Bessie Taylor Gwynn, who put sense into him. "'I ain't much interested in *Beo-*

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*wulf*,'" he recalls telling her. "'Boy, *I* am your English teacher, and I've taught you better than this. How dare you talk to me with 'I ain't' this and 'I ain't' that. . . . You know what *really* takes guts? Refusing to lower your standards to those of the dumb crowd.'"

He did refuse, and so advanced to a segregated college, where he excelled. With the arrival of war in 1941, the Navy set out to recruit its first black officers, and Mr. Rowan was the very first selected. These successes, he writes, left him with "an air of haughtiness that would antagonize [whites]," though it's not clear whether he came to regard this trait as a hard-won virtue or, like haughtiness in "some white male," a defect to be reformed.

There followed the usual stupid insults, slights, and cruelties by whites, unaccustomed, circa 1941, to being around blacks, much less saluting a black officer. But there were also some nicer moments, as when Mr. Rowan's superior introduced himself and dispensed orders to the new officer with no comment whatever about race or a "guess-who's-coming-aboard" talk to prepare the men. Mr. Rowan appreciated that, "for without any do-gooder lectures, the skipper had shown an acute understanding of what I—and other Negroes—wanted: no special restrictions and no special favors; just the right to rise and fall on merit." Thereafter the book traces the author's own rise, on merit, to "award-winning reporter," State Department spokesman, ambassador to Finland under President Kennedy, USIA Director under Johnson, and columnist right up to the present.

About those awards, though: here we encounter the flaw that dooms this entire book, the one "barrier" Mr. Rowan has not quite broken. Every award, every citation or certificate of merit, every medal, every commendation or honorable mention, and just about every bit of public praise the man has ever received, found its way into this book. "The Sidney Hillman Foundation gave me an award for 'the best newspaper reporting in the nation in 1951,'" we learn. "The curators of Lincoln University . . . cited me for 'high purpose, high achievement, and exemplary practice in the field of journalism.' And then the almost totally white Minneapolis Junior Chamber of Commerce named me Minneapolis's Outstanding Young Man of 1951!"

Soon afterward, "my peers in the journalism fraternity, Sigma Delta Chi, voted to give me the prized medallion for the best general reporting in the nation in 1953"; this for a series in the Minneapolis *Tribune*, "Jim Crow's Last Stand." "But before I could accept plaudits [from Sigma Delta Chi] I had another honor to accept. On January 2, 1954, the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce announced that I was one of America's Ten Outstanding Young Men of 1953!"

Goodness gracious, and as if all those prestigious honors weren't enough Mr. Rowan then garnered—May 18, 1955—"the coveted Sigma Delta Chi prize for foreign correspondence," and on that historic occasion heard this said of himself:

> Carl T. Rowan's series ["This is India"] combines masterful investigative reporting with pungent writing and objectivity in the best journalistic tradition. Here are fact finding, initiative, clarity, and organization in proportions no newspaper reader, however indifferent, can ignore and no journalist, however high his standards, can fail to recognize as a model of inspired craftsmanship.

"A year later, on May 15, 1956, I was at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago being cited for 'best foreign correspondence of 1955' for my articles on Southeast Asia and my coverage of the Bandung Conference. I had now won a coveted Sigma Delta Chi medallion three years in succession, something no journalist had ever done." His children, Mr. Rowan notes, were right there in the audience to witness dad's triumph—the first and nearly only reference to his kids at all.

Not for us to belittle these plaques and medallions, recalling that the recipient was only 15 years earlier fending off the rats. Whether or not any of the hardware with which so many journalists and politicians like to adorn their offices, reminders of their selfless "public service," are really to be "coveted," surely this particular reporter was entitled to covet them. No doubt each honor seemed to carry him further from McMinnville. The only problem is that his recollections of these ceremonies and presentations are not followed, ever, by any serious reflection on the events he was so "masterfully" covering.

That Bandung Conference, for instance. Here he was, a young black reporter, assigned to the Afro-Asian Conference held in April 1955 in Bandung—among liberals, regarded nostalgically as a milestone in Third World self-assertion. But we get not a word, 36 years later, on the fate of all those black "liberators" and leaders assembled at the historic conference; no wistful reflections on the dictatorships, invasions, civil wars, and massacres so many of them would inflict on their countries. That more than a few of the African statesmen young Mr. Rowan observed and interviewed would go on to perpetrate atrocities against fellow blacks, horrors beyond the imagination of their colonial predecessors or even the cruelty of Jim Crow, seems not to have registered on the memoirist. We learn only that he was thrilled to witness such "international high drama," wrote a masterful series on the conference, and cleaned up at a subsequent awards banquet. Oh, yes, and we're told his book about Bandung "was selected by the American Library Association as one of the best of the year, an honor it also bestowed on my *South of Freedom*."

This leaves the unfortunate, and no doubt unjust, impression that the Outstanding Young Man of America was then, and remains, more interested in personal recognition than causes, even those about which he's so passionate. And, too, it leaves a gnawing doubt about other of his recollections, particularly those extensive conversations he quotes verbatim—exchanges in which Mr. Rowan invariably gets the best of some powerful white male.

For instance, after some principled difference of opinion with then-Vice President Johnson, LBJ is supposed to have owned up to his error, conceding gruffly that his aide, young Mr. Rowan, had after all been in the right. "'Listen,' Johnson said as he poked a finger into my chest. 'You just go on standing up for what you believe . . .'" "'Thank you, sir,'" Mr.



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Rowan says he replied. ("What a pity," he writes of LBJ in a rare meditative moment. "A man so great in so many ways, and so mean and petty in others." By contrast, Adlai Stevenson, who refused Rowan a car and driver during the latter's brief stint at the United Nations, was well-meaning but unfit to be President for the unfortunate if plausible reason that he "lacked balls.")

There follows an equally unlikely exchange the author supposedly had with President Reagan at a Gridiron dinner. Needless to say, the "actor-turned-rabble-rouser" gets the worst of it, and indeed is reduced to whimpering when his "glib cliches" prove futile against Mr. Rowan's forthright eloquence:

> Reagan: "I tried hard to win friendship among blacks, but I couldn't do it. . . ."
>
> Rowan: "And that's why you went almost eight years refusing to talk to the acknowledged black leaders of America?"
>
> Reagan: (now desperate): "They attacked me at the outset, so I said to hell with 'em."
>
> Rowan (firmly): "Sir, I've attacked you in my columns because I believe that any president of all the people must talk to all the people and their leaders."
>
> Reagan (after "a long pause"): "You know something? I should have talked to *you* seven years ago."

Whether the leader of the Free World really fell silent on hearing Carl Rowan's trite reformulation of Lincoln's "of the people, by the people" speech, we can't say for sure, but the pattern of all these exchanges never varies: Rowan is offended by some outrageous statement or insult about the poor and underprivileged, Rowan can stand it no longer, White Male cowers as Rowan delivers devastating reply—indeed, so devastating and eloquent that years later Rowan can reconstruct every word, objective, masterful, award-winning reporter that he is.

It was shortly after the Gridiron dinner that Mr. Rowan had that little incident for which, he says sorrowfully, he'll long be remembered. As all the world would read, one night Mr. Rowan encountered an unclothed interloper and lady friend cavorting in his backyard pool. Seeing Rowan, the man charged, only to be laid low by Rowan's unlicensed gun. It was only a wrist wound, but landed the pundit, a passionate gun-control advocate, in criminal court.

Leave aside the details of that ridiculous episode, and just consider this complaint, which reveals a good deal about Carl Rowan's world view: "The media staked out my house, hounding me everywhere, as though I had suddenly become some grotesque criminal. It was as if no one remembered, or gave a damn, that a few months earlier I was hosting the Ronald Reagans as president of the Gridiron Club. . . ."

Here the big columnist, champion of the poor and downtrodden, gets himself in a fix—and he wants to bring in the callous "actor-turned-rabble-rouser" as a character witness. Men have fallen from higher places than the presidency of the Gridiron Club, but one wonders what connection he saw between the dinner and the police investigation. What would he have expected officers on the scene to say—"Gee, Mr. Rowan, wish you'd mentioned that Gridiron affair with the Reagans earlier—we could have avoided this whole unpleasant business"?

That phrase above—the "acknowledged black leaders of America" with whom all Presidents must deal—just about sums up Mr. Rowan's career path. From an early life of true privation, he emerged rightly defiant, but never quite shook off that "haughtiness." He himself rose "on merit," but then, with other Acknowledged Black Leaders, succumbed to the affirmative action temptation that would deny others, black and white, the same privilege while further empowering—Acknowledged Black Leaders. He dismisses scornfully the "glib cliches" of Republican white males, and of course their black "quislings" who feel insulted by quotas and timetables, in a memoir full of warnings to "lily-white" Republicans about "turning back the clock"—as if these inspired new phrases will surely silence those glib clichés.

*Breaking Barriers* is a testament to the capacity of a comfortable Capital pundit to become an unquestioned fixture indulged by publishers and public alike, trading, like his fellow acknowledged black leaders, on yesterday's reputation, and more concerned with being "acknowledged" than with actually being a leader.

## LIBERAL ARTS

### ON RUSSIANS

You look at a Russian with a sharp little eye . . .
He looks at you with a sharp little eye. . . .
And everything is understood.
And no words are needed.
That's just what is impossible with a *foreigner*.

*(In the street.)*

—from *Solitaria*,
by V.V. Rozanov, 1912



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# The City Beat

*by Bill Kauffman*

**Red Love**
*by David Evanier*
*New York: Scribner's;*
*340 pp., $19.95*

◆

*Red Love* is "third generation Leninist" porno star Suzie Sizzle's yet-unmade dream project, the love story of her aunt and uncle, the Rosenberg-like spies Dolly and Solly Rubell. Until Suzie's industry develops a revolutionary consciousness, we'll have to settle for David Evanier's novel of wit, fine malice, and the same title.

But first, a cavil: do we really need another book about this vile brace of traitors? The Communist Party never amounted to more than a band of jabbering foreigners and slumming heiresses in a couple of big East Coast cities. At its peak in 1932, the CP presidential candidate won 103,000 votes—about one-ninth the tally of Socialist Norman Thomas. Plenty of American radicals (Huey Long, Arthur Townley, Bob La Follette, Father Coughlin, Francis Townsend) attracted large followings in the prewar years but, with the happy exception of Huey, novelists and historians have slighted them. Even Eugene V. Debs, our greatest Marxist, a patriot whose socialism was seeded in his "beloved little community of Terre Haute, where all were neighbors and friends," is dwarfed by the contemptible Rosenbergs in American myth-history.

Okay, that's off my chest. Now on to the novel.

*Red Love* is narrated by Gerald Lerner, an apostate Communist out to bury once and for all the Rubells and the god that failed. Lerner came to the party in the late 50's, after Khrushchev's indictment of Stalin had denuded the CP of all but the most wretched losers. The remaining comrades "didn't f---, work, or change their socks—ever. They were eaters, shouters, screamers, slurpers. Healthy revolutionary males in their thirties had to be F.B.I. men."

And yet, the legend goes, there was a sunny Depression morn when progressive youth dreamed "a dream of justice," as Leonard Michaels says in his wildly inappropriate blurb for *Red Love*. (Did he read the book?) Communism would stamp out religious faith and parochialism and family love and other impediments along the road to utopia. The spoilsport Emma Goldman was warning that Bolshevism meant only "a change of masters," but, well, a cold heart like Emma's could never feel what Vivian Gornick termed "the romance of American communism." In the halcyon 30's, comrades were young and gay and life was an endless summer day.

Lerner learns that even in its golden age, communism had all the romance of a rape. The stateside Communists whom he encounters in his investigation of the Rubell case are Jews who scorn Judaism: on holidays they roast pigs and sing Christmas carols and watch blue movies and mock "the yarmulkes"—the *schleps* who cling to the old ways. Accounts of Stalin's pogroms are dismissed as fascist propaganda; disillusioned returnees from the Lincoln Brigades are deemed shell-shocked counterrevolutionaries.

Evanier, I think, sensed that the Rubells' tale verges on the stale; *Red Love*'s virtue is its gallery full of portraits of other wasted lives. Young Pioneers in New York City chant "Down with the Boy Scouts" and watch a boxing match in which Science knocks out Religion *and* the referee; an old crone keeps a bust of Stalin on her bookshelf and addresses her disturbed son as "fellow worker"; Paul Robeson records play, and play, and play.

Evanier writes frequently for *Commentary*, but *Red Love* is no repentant rant by a guilt-ridden ex-lunchroom Trotskyite. Some passages are actually funny:

—A comrade recalls Solly's attitude toward his Roy Cohn-like nemesis, Hy Briske: "If Solly had his way, he might have exterminated this scumbag, but only if he was told to do so. His first approach would have been to attempt to correct Hy's thinking."

—Solly gushes over the Little Woman: "Dolly . . . is the most beautiful person I have ever met. . . . She is in pain so much of the time from her back, her headaches, and the suffering of the workers. She has such revolutionary anger; she never deviates from it. She referred to Eisenhower the other day as a "guttersnipe in striped pants." And "a privileged fascist dog." . . . I mean, she talks that way to me. I have learned so much from her integrity."

—Solly's sister laments at a post-execution rally: "To think he didn't live to experience the joys of television."

A few of Evanier's burlesques fall flat: Hy Briske's audacious disrespecting of Ike, for one, and an extended take on an anti-Semitic Arkansas radio preacher named Reverend Bob. (Arkansas is one of those states *out there*, where white-hooded lynch mobs rule the roost and gap-toothed Brylcreemed clerics are named Billy or Bob, or, if to the manor born, Billy Bob. So say the TV Movies of the Week, anyway.)

Evanier stumbles when he ventures beyond Jersey City. A brief chapter set in Alabama is downright embarrassing. America's open wound—slavery and later injustices visited upon black citizens—is quite beyond cartooning. Evanier's South is limited to Bull Connor and Noble Sidney Poitier Negroes: it's the celluloid South of Martin Ritt, flat and unconvincing.

When he sticks to the city beat, though, Evanier is gimlet-eyed and unsentimental. Vivian Gornick and the other CP apologists can burnish and whitewash all they want, but David Evanier knows why the Rubells did it—and why thousands of other intelligent human beings pledged allegiance to the ideology of totalitarianism.

Evanier gives us the key in an exchange between Solly and a CP muckamuck, as the hapless spy ponders his imminent execution.

"I love my babies," Solly sobs to the woman.

The comrade is unmoved.



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"Babies are born every minute," she assures Solly. "And now they will be free."

*Bill Kauffman is author of the novel* Every Man a King. *He lives in Batavia, New York.*

# One-Fifth Pink

***by Chilton Williamson, Jr.***

**Flashman and the Mountain of Light**
*by George MacDonald Fraser*
*New York: Alfred A. Knopf;*
*365 pp., $22.00*

◆

Anticipating the latest Flashman novel is always a delight, and then there are the reviews to look forward to. The best of these are humorless, priggish, and hortatory, and read as if they had been composed by the writer with his left hand, while he was holding his nose with the right one. For bookmongers of this sort, the fictional Sir Harry Flashman, VC—coward, cad, ravisher of willing women, and genial oppressor of all people of color—is so complete a representation of the White Heterosexual Male Monster in action as to have attained reality and become one of the documented bugaboos of the unredeemed historical past. Their response suggests that, in Sir Harry, George MacDonald Fraser has created a stereotypical anti-hero; paradoxically, the opposite is really true. Fraser's genius is expressed in his ability to compound *two* stereotypes—that of the Victorian hero and of the Marxian exploiter and butcher—with such skill and imagination that the result is a fictional character of parts, alive and at large in a world of multiple dimensions. Let those who have ears, hear; those who have eyes, see!

*Flashman and the Mountain of Light* is the ninth volume developed from a series of manuscript packets, wrapped in oilskins and discovered more than twenty years ago in a saleroom in the English Midlands, that comprise the memoirs of the Victorian toast who candidly reveals himself to have been as well the cowardly bully of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Working as editor and annotator, Mr. Fraser has published the *mss.* in order of their composition, which is *not* however a chronological one. Previous tomes depict Flashman fighting in the Afghan War of 1842, in the China War of 1860, and with General George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn (of which he was the sole, though unknown, survivor) in 1876, among other events and places; the present one is his account of his participation in (and also his absence from) the First Sikh War of 1845-46, in which the *Khalsa*—the great "Pure" army of the Punjab—marched on the British with the intent of driving them into the sea.

As so often in his career, Sir Harry's most dangerous involvements in the Punjabi crisis were the direct result of his strenuous attempts at avoiding them. In this instance, however, his overriding concern for Number One led him, however unintendedly, to perform heroic and genuinely useful service to his country—for which he received precious little credit: "Most of my campaigns have ended with undeserved roses all the way to Buckingham Palace, so I can even smile at the irony that when, for once, I'd done good service (funking, squealing, and reluctant, I admit) and come close to lying in the ground for it, all I received was the cold shoulder, meekly endured . . . well, more or less." On the credit side, as a British spy in disguise of legal diplomat to the *durbar* in Lahore during the months preceding the war, he had enjoyed galloping the gorgeous Maharani in her palace boudoir ("rattling royalty," as he referred to such activity), and admiring the Koh-i-Noor diamond (the so-called "Mountain of Light") she wore in her belly button; had his portrait commissioned by her; and finally received an indirect proposal of marriage, an idea he set decorously aside for the stated reason that, "Mrs. Flashman wouldn't like it a bit." For a man whose skills and interests lay almost exclusively with women, horses, foreign languages (so convenient in a pinch), and careful observation (even more so), he appears to have come through the ordeal well enough. Most importantly, he had managed to be present at the crucial battle of Ferozepore and Sobraon as a spectator, rather than as a participant. (Both engagements, by the way, are described splendidly, and with great accuracy.)

In the First Sikh War, Sir Harry's nemesis proved to be Sir Henry Hardings, at the time Governor-General of India. Regarding him, Flashman's evaluation is astute, from both the personal and the political standpoint:

> I suspected that Harding's aversion to me was rooted in a feeling that I spoiled the picture he had in mind of the whole Sikh War. My face didn't fit; it was a blot on the landscape, all the more disfiguring because he knew it belonged there. I believe he dreamed of some noble canvas, for exhibition in the great historical gallery of public approval—a true enough picture, mind you, of British heroism and faith unto death in the face of impossible odds; aye, and of gallantry by that stubborn enemy who died on the Sutlej [River]. Well, you know what I think of heroism and gallantry, but I recognize 'em only as a born coward can. But they would be there, rightly, on the noble canvas. . . . Well, you can't mar a spectacle like that with a *Punch* cartoon border of Flashy rogering dusky damsels and spying and conniving dirty deals with Lal and Tej, can you now?

With his assessment of the business of empire—how it is won, and how it may be held—Sir Harry is no less shrewd, and most comprehensive, in his view:

> You'll have heard it said that the British Empire was acquired in a fit of absence of mind—one of those smart Oscarish squibs that sounds well but is thoroughly fat-headed. *Presence* of mind, if you like—and countless other things, such as greed and Christianity, decency and villainy, policy and lunacy, deep design and blind chance, pride and trade, blunder and curiosity, passion, ignorance, chivalry and expediency, honest pursuit of right, and determination to keep the bloody Frogs out. And often as not, such things came tumbling



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> together, and when the dust had settled, there we were, and who else was going to set things straight and feed the folk and guard the gate and dig the drains—oh, aye, and take the profit, by all means. . . . When I'm done, you may not be much clearer on how the map of the world came to be one-fifth pink, but at least you should realize that it ain't something to be summed up in an epigram. Absence of mind, my arse. We *always* knew what we were doing; we just didn't always know how it would pan out.

Here again, Flashman gives us the great canvas, noble and ignoble flung down, and overlaid with the chaos and energy of a painting by Jackson Pollock. It lacks the scientific rigor with which Marx understood the British Empire, and it wouldn't play at Stanford University today—or if it did, it would be as Prosecutorial Exhibit Number One. It is, on the other hand, life—life as Shakespeare, Cervantes, Fielding, and Gibbon understood the word. Human—all too human.

*Chilton Williamson, Jr. is senior editor for books at* Chronicles.

# The Romantic Streak

***by Brad Linaweaver***

**Tucker's Last Stand**
*by William F. Buckley, Jr.*
*New York: Random House;*
*259 pp., $19.95*

◆

A review of an early Blackford Oakes novel referred to Mr. Buckley's handling of a sex scene as the Hardy Boys go to a bordello. In this, the ninth book in the series, Buckley demonstrates a surer grasp, one might say, of such matters. There is a sense in which Oakes's missions for the CIA, reconstituted and romanticized from authentic events, are themselves a form of hanky-panky. Buckley's James Bondish hero really knows how to fool around.

This time William F. Buckley, Jr., places his hero in harm's way with a story about the Vietnam War. As each adventure in the series brings us closer to the present day, Buckley loses some of the advantage of distance from the events being portrayed. Each of these novels contains large portions of contemporary history. He is most comfortable portraying the great, imagining what passes for small talk in their councils. There is an almost slapstick quality whenever President Johnson is on stage, and no one who reads this novel will ever forget (no matter how hard he might try) the description of LBJ in the nude. Buckley displays a genuine affection for Barry Goldwater, and some of his funniest dialogue is reserved for exchanges between Mr. Conservative and his handlers. He finds irresistible the temptation to recycle one-liners and clever editorial commentary from *National Review* and to place them in the mouths of his political characters.

The only trouble with all this admittedly entertaining stuff is that it overshadows the novel. The problems faced by Oakes and his partner, one Tucker Montana, in interdicting traffic on the Ho Chi Minh Trail can't hold a candle to all the scheming going on behind the scenes for the 1964 presidential election. It is not that Buckley stints on action or danger—each one of these novels fulfills the criteria of the spy genre—but that his interest lies more with those who formulate policy than with the poor bastards who have to carry it out. And yet his heart is with the latter: a genuine sympathy infuses particular scenes that depict a divided humanity, facing itself across the barricades.

Part of the interest in *Tucker's Last Stand* is in that tension between what Mao so aptly termed hearts and minds. A number of critics have compared the Oakes novels to the work of John Le Carré, but this clearly is a mistake. That Buckley avoids the potboiler aspect of the genre is incontestable, but he is still very much writing melodramatic fare about good guys and bad guys. Le Carré uses the settings and props of spy fiction to ignore the genre, and to write a different breed of novel entirely. The moral ambiguity of Le Carré's universe is what Buckley is going up against.

This is especially evident in the latest novel, where the main character is not really Blackford Oakes but Tucker Montana (shifting the focus to other characters is a method Buckley frequently employs to keep the series from going stale). Tucker is the emotional opposite of a Le Carré character, but he has had the sort of experiences that sour a spy and make him think about coming in from the cold. In other words, he thinks like an adolescent in a world of adults—which is how his creator manages to put across a strong element of romanticism.

For with a subject as unpopular as the Vietnam War, Buckley needs to be able to play it both ways. There is no compelling reason for Blackford Oakes to be under a cloud of gloom concerning his latest covert operations (stage-managing the Gulf of Tonkin incident), except that both author and reader know the war will be a disaster for the United States. One wonders if Tucker Montana's divided loyalties might receive less sympathy from his friend Blackie if the war were not foredoomed. As it is, Buckley allows his most sympathetic character yet to suffer from what might be called atomic *angst*; and in true pulp-fiction style, Tucker is a guy who has enough expertise, and sufficient experience, to fill résumés for a dozen illustrious careers (among other things he did technical work on the Hiroshima bomb).

Whenever this novel threatens to become a techno-thriller, and the background seems excruciatingly thorough, we are reminded of the human being behind the lectures: Tucker Montana, the overgrown kid, whom Rufus the spymaster refers to as a genius who isn't very bright. He is a man who can single-handedly wipe out a platoon in the Philippines, or single-handedly devise a system of automatic sensors to bedevil the enemy he insists upon calling gooks, but who is helpless against the most consistently recurring problem in the Blackford Oakes novels: women.

Whether it is Oakes himself, unable to win true devotion from long-suffering Sally, or the latest in a series of supremely competent warriors who are so desperate for love that they will believe any lie spoken by alluring lips, these novels are modern in the chasm they both dread and celebrate. In Nietzsche's phrase, the abyss looks



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back into the men who contemplate it, because they have the capacity for idealism. But in Buckley's fiction, women are the abyss. Betrayal is as natural as a sigh, and as predictable as tomorrow's guilt. In the face of such sadness, dreams of peace deserve nothing more than a funeral shroud.

*Brad Linaweaver is a novelist and a book reviewer for the* Atlanta Journal and Constitution.

# Red Talk

*by Gregory McNamee*

**Talking with Robert Penn Warren**
*Edited by Floyd C. Watkins, John T. Hiers, and Mary Louise Weaks*
*Athens: University of Georgia Press; 419 pp., $45.00*

◆

Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989) was, in the old expression, a man of parts, a complex intellectual who spent much of his adult life in northern universities, a Kentucky farm boy with the heart and soul of a Confederate gentleman. A founding member of the Agrarian movement of the 1930's, leader of the so-called Fugitive circle of poets, and guiding light of the New Criticism, he was both culturally conservative and artistically avant-garde. And he was a first-rate thinker and a good talker, as the pages of the delightful collection *Talking with Robert Penn Warren* reveal in abundance.

Comprising 24 conversations, interviews, and transcribed television appearances, the collection reveals Warren at his plainspoken best. He is generous, bookish, matter-of-fact, occasionally impatient. "I think people can freeze themselves by their hasty intellectualizing of what they are up to," he remarks, somewhat impatiently, to a too-pompous interlocutor, and goes on to spin out front-porch anecdotes of the writer's life that shun academic pretense and are all the more attractive for it.

Yet Warren's homespun talk is perfectly serious, the more so as the years roll by. (The collection is arranged chronologically, and the reader has the chance to see Warren revising himself, his opinions, even the facts of his life from page to page.) He reiterates the concerns of his Agrarian days, drawing on Jeffersonian ideals of the proper relationship of humans to nature and antebellum notions of states' rights to oppose the rise of the great American technological monoculture (whereby Atlanta, absent its peach trees, looks like any northern or Midwestern burg). He announces his great love for America in idea and fact while steadfastly criticizing its weaker moments, especially the historical oppression of blacks and the conduct of the aimless war in Vietnam.

Radical views, to some, but Warren has more often been unfairly pegged to the reactionary right. Having dared to give politicians a human face and the normal frailties in *All the King's Men*, Warren was exposed to criticism from all manner of leftist orthodoxies. His good-natured, but perfectly serious response: "I've been accused of being a fascist off and on all my life. That's what happens to a Jeffersonian Democrat in this crazy world we live in." His opposition to the war in Vietnam, voiced most compellingly in an interview with the ever-pious Bill Moyers (who, as Lyndon Johnson's press secretary, perfected the art of doublespeak), grows from the political ideals of the early Republic. America's in-

## BRIEF MENTIONS

**IN JOY AND IN SORROW: WOMEN, FAMILY AND MARRIAGE IN THE VICTORIAN SOUTH**
**Edited by Carol Bleser, with an introduction by C. Vann Woodward**
**New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press; 330 pp., $24.95**

In one way or another 18 historians have contributed to this volume on the 19th-century South, and editor Carol Bleser of Clemson University is to be commended for giving the reader a collection that displays the full range of what is going on in social history. If the essays here run the gamut from brilliant to disgraceful, they are all the more representative for their unevenness. Some of the topics are serious (female individualism), some trivial (Walker Percy's great-aunts), some fashionably off-color (incest and miscegenation), and some just silly (cookbooks).

Bertram Wyatt-Brown's true subject is Will and Walker Percy, and he seems interested in the work of the Ware sisters and of their niece primarily for the opportunity their poetry and Gothic novels give him to psychoanalyze the family. Virginia Burr provides a readable portrait of her great-grandmother, Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas of Georgia, but cannot put the woman in any kind of a context, as Elizabeth Fox-Genovese is able to do in her more illuminating treatment of South Carolinian Sarah Gayle. Fox-Genovese discusses the sense of self envisioned by Southern women like Gayle, who saw themselves within a network of family relations and did not, as in a more bourgeois culture (read the north), define themselves as "individuals."

Less successful is Catherine Clinton's "'Southern Dishonor': Flesh, Blood, Race and Privilege." Clinton takes the position that only racial prejudice can explain the widespread disapproval of interracial fornication and adultery, as though fidelity and chastity were of no concern to the Christian Southerner. She also cites the W.P.A. oral testimony of ex-slaves as though this evidence were unquestionably accurate; as valuable as those interviews are, they must be taken with a critical grain of salt, as even so sympathetic a historian as Eugene Genovese has made clear. Her final sentence, "And I propose that we make sure the worst is yet to come: that Southern honor be dethroned and that antebellum Southern dishonor take its rightful place at center stage," is not scholarship but politics.

The outstanding piece in the volume is Eugene Genovese's humorous "Toward a Kinder and Gentler America: The Southern Lady and the Greening of the Politics of the Old South," in which he reveals the deep political involvement of Southern women. In the fine tradition of Andrew Jackson's mother, such women as Anna Maria Calhoun Clemson and Mary Henrietta Pinckney (and many less well-known) spurred their men on to duels, secession, and war. His more academic article on the ties that bound slaves and masters together, "'Our Family, White and Black': Family and Household in the Southern Slaveholders' World View," is also very good, and proof for the war-weary that there are some in Southern studies motivated by a love of their subject, rather than by its opposite.

*—Katherine Dalton*



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volvement gave rise to the government's refusing to tell the truth, for which there could be only one solution: "We've got to quit lying to ourselves all the time." Amen.

Plain talk, as plain as a Tennessee farmer's butternut tunic. Robert Penn Warren—"Red," to his friends, among whose number the reader is instantly enrolled—is at home in these pages, alive with ideas, with just the right aphorism or reminiscence at the ready. For his many readers, *Talking with Robert Penn Warren* is essential reading.

*Gregory McNamee is a freelance writer and author living in Tucson.*

# Fevered Dreams

*by Theodore Pappas*

**E.B. White: Writings From The New Yorker, 1925-1976**
*Edited by Rebecca M. Dale*
*New York: HarperCollins;*
*244 pages, $20.00*

◆

Collected here are 159 of E.B. White's short pieces written for the *New Yorker*. They show White at his best: as critic, essayist, humorist, and satirist. Though he will perhaps best be remembered for *Charlotte's Web* and the *Elements of Style*, these slices of life on everything from lipstick to atomic weaponry remind us of White's talent as a cultural critic.

Rebecca Dale has divided the material into such subjects as liberty, New York, nature, and inventions, and within each section the chronological arrangement allows the reader to witness not only the development of White as a thinker, from his rather whimsical and flippant commentaries of the 1920's to his weightier pieces of the 1950's and 60's, but the increasing refinement of his impeccable prose.

It is in his roles as raconteur, as pithy observer of life, and as an enemy of cant that White's abilities shine brightest. We are shown White the individualist who, in an essay that is as pertinent today as it was when he wrote it in 1938, argued that government funding for the arts "assumes, among other things, that art is recognizable in embryo—or at least recognizable enough to make it worth the public's while to pay for raising the baby. And it assumes that artists, like chickens, are responsive to proper diet." There is White the freethinker who, in commenting on a newspaperman's concern for what today would be called "political correctness," wrote that "under such conditions, the fourth estate becomes a mere parody of the human intelligence, and had best be turned over to bright birds with split tongues or to monkeys who can make change." And there is White the social critic who mocked the child-centric nature of our culture. Lindbergh's true accomplishment was not completing the trip, argued White, but that he accomplished his feat "without saying that he did it for the kiddies."

There is also White the meticulous draftsman, the grammatical purist, for whom the Constitution could not possibly have been written "to form a *more perfect* union," for whom an advertisement's promise to keep lips looking "ravishing yet virginal" left him wondering whether the manufacturer wanted ladies "to be ravished, or does he want them to remain virgins?" There is White the eternal optimist who, in a story seemingly about the dangers of poisonous bulbs and seeds, reminds his reader that "we must plant this garden anyway." And there is White the staunch protector of personal privacy. Though Dale gives ample examples of this side to White, all pale before his gallant stance against the 1940 census in a piece written for *Harper's*: "Nobody looks forward with any pleasure to answering questions about his income or his bathtub. Privacy, the abstract blessing, is a lot bigger than the average-sized tub. And, like a tub, it can be irreparably marred by a blow from a blunt instrument, or law."

Despite his many virtues as a social critic, White was an orthodox liberal who embraced the fashionable causes of his day, particularly world government. Like so many of his contemporaries, White saw little hope for humanity without a new international order to deal with the new science of destruction. He held high hopes for the United Nations, and even covered the Dumbarton Oaks Conference for the *New Yorker* in 1944, but he was not blind to the organization's weakness or to the rivalries that continued between national delegates. He even suggested that the proposed location for the U.N. be changed from New York to Dinosaur Park, "so that earnest statesmen, glancing up from their secret instructions from the home office, may gaze out upon the prehistoric sovereigns who kept on fighting one another until they perished from the earth."

In the end, however, it is White's witty humor that rises to the top. Regarding the rumble seat in one of White's first cars, "the only lady who ever ventured into the rumble skinned her right knee getting in and her left knee getting out, thus preserving a kind of rough symmetry through it all." Regarding the 1944 invention of revolving doors with electronic eyes that determined "the right moment" for the door to begin moving, "an electric eye for a revolving door would need to be fitted with bifocals, because one person's right moment is another person's Dunkirk." And what about the Soviet Union's decision in 1957 to send a dog into space, to check the animal's pulse, among other things? Well, White's dead dachshund Fred, whose ghost frequently visited White, told the writer that no dog would fritter away time on such tricks: "A dog's curiosity leads him into pretty country and toward predictable trouble, such as a porcupine quill in the nose. Man's curiosity has led finally to outer space where rabbits are as scarce as gravity. Well, you fellows can have outer space. You may eventually get a quill in the nose from some hedgehog of your own manufacture, but I don't envy you the chase. So long, old Master. Dream your fevered dreams!"

*Theodore Pappas is the assistant editor of* Chronicles.

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# Critics at Work

*by William H. Nolte*

**Neoconservative Criticism: Norman Podhoretz, Kenneth S. Lynn and Joseph Epstein**
*by Mark Royden Winchell*
*Boston: Twayne Publishers;*
*175 pp., $22.95*

◆

Just what is "neoconservative criticism"? What gives it any particular essence or distinguishes it from other brands being bartered in bookstores and newsstands throughout the Republic? The wiseacre might answer that it is the kind of criticism practiced by neoconservatives, and thus leave us where we began—that is, in the dark. Which is just about where we find ourselves after turning the final page of Professor Winchell's sometimes amusing, if not very enlightening, study of the phenomenon (assuming there is such a thing). The three critics chosen as exemplars of neoconservative crit. may, or may not, relish the pigeonhole they have been asked to occupy, but never mind: they are treated tenderly, at times almost lovingly, and hence will not think of calling their lawyers. If none of the trio has the heft and beam of a great critic or editor, all have raised considerable dust in the literary arena, and they have made some imprint on the National Letters.

But there is still that neoconservative tag that bothers me, as it apparently bothers Winchell, who tries—not very successfully—to pin it down in his first chapter, and then waves at it again in the final two or three pages of the book. Early on we are informed that neoconservative intellectuals "are recent converts to laissez-faire economics and have been cultural traditionalists from the cradle," and that their conversion to the (political) right is attributable to the ideological "struggle between pro-Communist and anti-Communist intellectuals during the middle decades of this century." Which may help our understanding a little but surely not much. At least we are spared hearing about the political pilgrimage of the anti-anticommunists. But we do hear something of how neoconservatives (who, in some way, resemble current liberals) differ from paleoconservatives—mainly regarding how those two subspecies view the Founding Fathers of our "liberal democratic traditions." In fact, one critic, called upon for aid in the "defining" process, suggests that neoconservatives might better be la-


***IN THE MARCH ISSUE***

***Roger Scruton***
*on Robert Bork*

***Peter Curran***
*on Art Colleges*

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*on Muslim Schooling*

***Anthony Wagner***
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beled paleoliberals. Incidentally, if no one seems to know quite what to make of "liberal" when used as an adjective, everyone seems pleased with the "democratic" label—despite the fact that "democracy" has little if any concrete meaning these days, having become almost pure abstraction; even more abstract than the word "freedom," which at least retains a residue of concrete meaning.

Of far more interest, to me anyhow, are the following chapters on the three critics and their pronouncements pro and con—especially con. Indeed, they are all more than a little touchy and quick to take offense, and they all enjoy nothing more than the controversy that allows them to vent their spleen. The most common enemy for Norman Podhoretz, who has been editor of *Commentary* since 1960, has been Marxism in general and American leftists in particular. Winchell also touches on various disputes Podhoretz has had with such writers as Hannah Arendt, Norman Mailer, and Gore Vidal. He chastised Arendt for being too harsh on the Jews and too soft on the Nazis in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; he felt betrayed by Mailer, a good friend, who wrote an unfavorable review of *Making It*, which ironically was inspired, Winchell says, by Mailer's *Advertisements for Myself*; and he accused Vidal of being anti-Semitic for having attacked him (Podhoretz) and other Jewish supporters of Israel. Not having read Vidal's article I cannot comment on its content or its alleged anti-Semitism, but the following curious statement leaves no doubt of Winchell's position: "What [Podhoretz] discovered was that left-wing tolerance of anti-Semitism has grown so widespread that very few prominent liberals bothered to criticize Vidal, even when Podhoretz urged them to do so." I say curious since I can see no reason for writers of any persuasion to do Podhoretz's bidding unless they have their *own* reasons for doing so. One surely doesn't have to be a racist in order to find fault with Israel. The reader deserves a better briefing in this matter than the little that Winchell provides.

If Podhoretz's animadversions are mainly political, those of Kenneth Lynn and Joseph Epstein are more strictly literary in nature. What binds the three together, as I say, is their rancor. They are forever riding forth to do battle against their erring fellow critics, correcting the misinterpretations (and misreadings), as they see them, of their peers—and thereby performing one of the critic's noblest functions. Critical disputes, it seems to me, are always salubrious. Moreover, the best criticism will invariably be judicious—that is, judgmental. And judgments, in turn, beget disagreements, which are not only beneficial to our understanding but are entertaining to the reader or observer. And since criticism is an art rather than a science, the critic must entertain in order to capture and hold an audience. Lynn, for example, satisfies all those criteria in his *The Air-Line to Seattle*, a collection of essays on literary and historical writing in America that is almost entirely negative in its assessments. That is, negative in its assessment of this or that historian's or critic's assessment of Hemingway, or Thomas Jefferson, or Walt Whitman, or whomever. (Incidentally, most of the articles in *Air-Line* first appeared in Podhoretz's *Commentary* and in the *American Scholar*, which is edited by Epstein.) Lynn will probably be best remembered for his exhaustive study of Hemingway's life and work, published in 1987, which, despite its psychoanalytical approach (only a humorless Freudian could swallow it whole without choking and begging mercy), both debunks the myths that have grown up around the man and corrects various interpretations of the work that have gone unchallenged.

In the chapters devoted to Epstein, Winchell concentrates almost as much on the personality of his subject as on his *oeuvre*; this is understandable, since Epstein is much more confessional, so to speak, than his two fellow critics. He is also more the stylist, as evidenced by the essays he writes under the pseudonym Aristides for each issue of the *American Scholar*. Winchell is at his best in examining that style. In paying tribute, however, he sometimes descends to the merely feckless—as here, for example: "But Epstein is never more appealing than when he is waxing nostalgic or introspective. For those who share his dislikes, it is comforting to know that the smirking polemicist is also an honest-to-God human being. For those who want to go on hating him, that revelation is probably as disconcerting as being charmed by your ex-wife's current husband."

But all in all, this little book is amusing enough. Any reader interested in the current literary scene will enjoy the gossip, if nothing else.

*William H. Nolte is an emeritus professor of English at the University of South Carolina.*

# Fiddling Around

*by J.O. Tate*

**Mischa Elman and the Romantic Style**
*by Allan Kozinn*
*New York: Harwood Academic Publishers; 405 pp., $42.00*

**From Russia to the West: The Musical Memoirs and Reminiscences of Nathan Milstein**
*by Nathan Milstein and Solomon Volkov*
*Translated from the Russian by Antonina W. Bouis*
*New York: Henry Holt and Company; 282 pp., $24.95*

◆

All of the enchantment of the violin and its repertory, the provenance of Russia and specifically of Odessa, the pedagogy of Leopold Auer (who also taught Jascha Heifetz, Efrem Zimbalist, and Toscha Seidel), and decades of international celebrity—that's a lot in common. But these books, one about Mischa Elman and one by Nathan Milstein, are in no way a matched set. They don't even belong on the same shelf.

Allan Kozinn's study of Elman gives his subject the benefit of research, knowledge, and perspective. Mischa Elman (1891-1967) was a child prodigy who emerged from a humble background to achieve towering success in only a few years. By 1904, he had made a successful Berlin debut. In the next year, he caused a sensation in London and was asked to play for the kings of England and Spain. At the age of 17, Mischa Elman was already "the king of violinists"—but not for long.

He was soon to be the victim of a



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famous witticism—one that marked a sea change of style and performance practice. Elman attended the Carnegie Hall debut of Jascha Heifetz (October 27, 1917) in the company of the eminent pianist Leopold Godowsky; and when Elman remarked "Isn't it awfully hot in this hall?" Godowsky replied, "Not for pianists." The humor of that anecdote has masked its reality; and in a sense, there is the theme of Kozinn's volume. Though Elman had earned the respect of Auer, Joachim, and Ysäye—that is to say, the blessing of the 19th century—he was made to seem "old-fashioned" by the aggressive and brilliant Heifetz, just as the world was shaken up by the First World War. Much of the sweetness of life, in the form of flexible *tempi*, beautiful sonority, and personal expressivity, was blasted away as music absorbed mechanical imagery, the industrial ethos, and modernist assumptions.

> When the smoke cleared, the strict and streamlined approach of Arturo Toscanini displaced the more freely breathing and manipulative styles of Mengelberg and Furtwängler, among conductors; and among pianists, Arthur Schnabel's aristocratic approach displaced the personalized renderings of Elman's friends Leopold Godowsky and Josef Hofmann—although Vladimir Horowitz, a grand-Romantic by any standard, did not begin his American career until 1928. But Horowitz's Romanticism, like Heifetz's, surely differed from the subjective interpretation that had come before. It was personal and individual; but it was also glitzy, highly polished, and modern.

The difference between Elman and Heifetz can today be vividly demonstrated by comparing their early recordings of the Tchaikovsky concerto, both conducted by Barbirolli—Elman's of 1929 (available today on Pearl GEMM CD 9388, imported by Koch International) and Heifetz's of 1937 (formerly on a Seraphim LP, 60221, if you haven't got the original 78's). Elman is searching, soulful, and singing; the barlines scarcely exist. Heifetz is brilliant and tight; the *melos* is submerged beneath the passage-work.

Kozinn's book does more than tell the story of a great instrumentalist; it uses him as an example—a salient one—of the fate of the Romantic *virtuoso* in the modern environment. Though he does not make the comparison, there may have been more than a stylistic difference between Elman and Heifetz; Elman was a devoted family man all his life; Heifetz died in an embittered loneliness. What Kozinn does argue, in portraying Elman in context, is that his Jewish background was decisive in determining his musical character. He sees Elman as a product of the tradition of the *badchen*, and other Russian, American, and Israeli violinists in that light as well. He implies, too, that Elman had an affinity with the melodic line that is highly vocal in its orientation, the same point a German critic made when he proclaimed that Elman's performance of the Mendelssohn concerto had the quality of *bel canto*. As one who once had the good fortune to hear Elman play that piece, I can't argue with the judgment.

Allan Kozinn's biography of Mischa Elman is brimming over with information and analysis, with anecdotes and criticism, and with the sense of a musician's life. His book includes as it should a complete discography, and gives a thoroughly satisfying account of Elman's career in context, as well as close-ups of his personal life. Mischa Elman, who left such individual sound-images behind, deserves no less.

But Nathan Milstein (born 1904) has not agreed that he himself deserves such a thoughtful treatment. His reminiscences of Odessa and St. Petersburg before the war and the revolution, of Soviet Russia in the early 1920's, of Auer and Horowitz, and of the Russian culture he misses to this day—all these have a colorful force. He continues with his stories of his western travels, an abundance of anecdotes about celebrities, and too many references to food. Perhaps Milstein's best chapter, if it is not his treatment of Rachmaninoff, is the one on Eugène Ysäye and Queen Elizabeth of Belgium. But as the pages fly by, the realization sinks in that Nathan Milstein has no theme, no organizing idea that he wishes to impart. Although he emphasizes his Russian roots, he goes so far as to embrace his nearly stateless existence, so Russia and exile is not his theme. The violin, curiously enough, is not his theme, either. Aside from some remarks on the importance of bows, this great violinist has little to say about his instrument. And most of his remarks about the violin literature are oddly shallow: Beethoven didn't know how to write for the violin, Brahms's violin concerto isn't much good, and neither are those of Sibelius and Elgar.

The one pattern I could isolate was a series of stories ending "Milstein was right!" or "Nathan, you were right!" But though many of his observations are shrewd ones, Nathan Milstein hasn't taken the trouble to make much out of his memories, which in this form remind me of nothing so much as one of those "as told to" sports autobiographies that blight the bookstalls.

Just why Milstein would settle for so little is hard to understand. The elegant violinist of impeccable taste and musicianship would hardly seem to be the source of so much self-indulgence and triviality, and so little serious substance. But so he is. Milstein's book is recommended for those in search of gossipy stories, memories of food, and explanations of why Nathan Milstein is great, even without his violin.

*J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.*


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# Letter From California

*by Jay Kinney*

## Soviet Agitprop Implodes

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Though it gets harder to remember with every passing day, one of the long-established premises of the recently ended Cold War was the notion that both the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. were engaged in an ideological battle for the minds and souls of the world's population. In line with this the West used powerful transmitters to beam Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty past the Iron Curtain while the Soviets spent millions trying to jam the broadcasts. For its part, the U.S.S.R. established numerous international front organizations and publications to parrot the Soviet line.

For decades this East-West psychological warfare was relatively upfront. Their side touted Marxism-Leninism, denounced American imperialism, and encouraged Third World "liberation struggles." Meanwhile, our side touted the free market and democracy, denounced Soviet imperialism, and encouraged Third World development. However, after five years of *glasnost* and *perestroika* and the much heralded end of the Cold War, we have come to a puzzling juncture where the psy-war hasn't exactly ended but seems to have imploded—at least at the Soviet end. Soviet propaganda is still being produced, but the logic behind it has gotten a little . . . twisted.

To see this more clearly, consider for a moment a typical pre-*glasnost* analysis of Soviet "active measures," *i.e.*, propaganda and disinformation aimed at the West. In *Dezinformatsia: The Strategy of Soviet Disinformation* (1986), two Sovietologists identified Soviet propaganda themes and noted their reproduction by front organizations and other secondary sources. The authors analyzed two prime sources: the weekly "International Review" column in *Pravda* and *New Times*, the "Soviet Weekly of World Affairs," which is published by the International Information Department of the Central Committee in ten different language editions and shipped all over the world.

Stanislav Levchenko, a former KGB officer who had worked undercover as a *New Times* journalist, described the supposed targets of *New Times* propaganda this way:

> *New Times* propaganda in large part is directed against foreign elites. In Western Europe, this includes academics, journalists, political leaders, and so on. These are the kinds of individuals, the Soviets know, who read the magazine and are influenced by it. Additionally, *New Times* sets the lines on various issues for foreign Communist parties. . . . *New Times* also is used for internal propaganda directed at the population of the Soviet Union. *New Times*, in other words, is directed against both foreign and domestic audiences.

According to this pre-*glasnost* model, *New Times* ought to be a revealing source of Soviet propaganda and intentions. Moreover, with so much riding on it—the influencing of foreign elites, no less—it would stand to reason that the Soviets would be bending over backwards to get it to their target audience. Or so I assumed until I set out in search of contemporary Soviet agitprop.

The first thing that an American discovers in his quest to be propagandized is that the odds against success are overwhelming. This is not due to our government's effort to keep propaganda out of the country. Quite the contrary. The last time I checked, our customs and postal agencies were not confiscating shipments of revolutionary literature from abroad. During the 1970's the Chinese shipped crateloads of little red books that domestic Maoists eagerly snapped up without anyone in Washington batting an eyelash.

Rather, the problem seems to lie with the Soviets themselves. Just as they have trouble harvesting their own grain, the Soviets appear to have serious difficulty with getting their propaganda anywhere near that target audience of academics, journalists, and political leaders—or near *anyone* for that matter. Take *New Times*, for example.

*New Times* publishes, from time to time, an impressive list of outlets around the world where the curious can pick up a copy or enter a subscription. In San Francisco, *New Times* lists The Book Center (a modest little leftist bookstore in the Mission District that doubles as the office of the California branch of the CPUSA) and Zhanie Books (a primarily Russian-language bookstore). However, as I discovered on a recent visit, The Book Center hadn't received a new copy of *New Times* in several months. Why? An apologetic clerk explained that since their subscription of ten copies of the English-language edition had expired, the Soviets had been a bit slow in putting things back in order. There was a stack of fresh *New Times* in Spanish on the racks, proving that the Soviets hadn't lost interest in publishing per se, but precious months of potentially fruitful propagandizing were slipping down the drain, never to return.

The situation at Zhanie was hardly better. An initial phone call inquiring about *New Times* produced the glum news that "No, we don't have any *New Times*. They sell out within a day or two of when we get them in." Short of haunting the bookstore on a daily basis, it sounded like one had to have an inside line in order to lay hands on the periodical. Perhaps all of Zhanie's copies were being snapped up by local Russian émigrés nostalgic for the old sod. That left very few for foreign elites hoping to chow down on some genuine propaganda.

A visit to Zhanie a week or two later was even more discouraging. No *New Times* were in sight, only three-month-old copies of *Krokodil* and a few newspapers, all in Russian. Two elderly Russian women were indifferently in charge, lending the place an uncannily authentic Moscow air. Seized with a



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sudden terror that I might be forced to queue up for six hours only to be told that bread was unavailable, I tried to catch the eye of one of the women in order to make a quick inquiry about *New Times*. I should have known better. After ten minutes of waiting near the cash register, I was told that they were, of course, out of *New Times*.

The situation seemed more than a little absurd. Here I was in San Francisco, one of the most left-leaning cities on the continent, and I was totally unable to lay hands on a magazine that the Soviets were presumably eager to have me read. The local Communist Party couldn't be sure that their copies were going to arrive at all, while Zhanie apparently consistently sells out of them without bothering to increase their order. Was this any way to run a propaganda war? What was going on?

I next tried to track down a *New Times* while I was in Los Angeles. Los Angeles is, after all, the second-largest city in the country, and second only to New York in cultural influence. The back pages of the current incarnation of the old *Daily Worker*, the *People's Daily World*, showed a promising looking ad for the Progressive Bookshop on South St. Andrews Place. I checked the hours—the ad said the store was open from one to five in the afternoon, Tuesday through Friday—and set off across town. South St. Andrews Place turned out to be a dilapidated residential street in Koreatown, a neighborhood now primarily occupied by recent Korean immigrants. The Progressive Bookshop was a dusty old two-story house with a large front porch and a locked and bolted front door. A peeling sign on the front of the building identified it as the Hungarian-American Cultural Association. A small notice indicated the bookstore was on the second floor, in a converted bedroom no doubt, but none of the occupants—Hungarian-American or otherwise—were anywhere to be found. My propaganda pilgrimage was a bust.

Were any copies of *New Times* to be had on the West Coast at all? If so, where? How about the progressive groves of academia? I was finally able to locate *New Times* at the U.C. Berkeley library, where they have apparently had a running subscription since sometime in the 1930's. Once there I hunkered down with a selection of copies, both old and new, and pondered the current state of the psy-war.

Yes, indeed, as the authors of *Dezinformatsia* had contended, the issues of *New Times* until well into the Gorbachev era did read like classic Communist propaganda. America was an imperialist warmonger, SDI was threatening world peace, cruise missiles should not be installed in Europe, socialist comrades from around the world were underscoring their solidarity with each other, the CIA was up to its dirty tricks—in short, the old *New Times* read like a slightly cruder version of the *Nation* minus the Edward Sorel cartoons.

And then in 1988 a confounding transformation took place. Criticism of America faded out, while soul-searching self-criticism about the failure of socialism in the Eastern Bloc monopolized the pages. Wistful articles about the virtues of the free market crept in along with zingy personality pieces on such famous Westerners as Janet Jackson and U.K. press baron Robert Maxwell.

What in the devil were the Soviets


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up to? This stuff only made sense as propaganda if the intended themes were talking up capitalism and casting the Soviet Union as a backwater hasbeen. The only overt suasion I could identify was a tendency to rattle on about "Our Common European Home," in an obvious Soviet effort to court favor with Western Europe.

To be honest, I was rather charmed by *New Times*' modesty, and this caused me to wonder if the Soviets weren't pioneering a new brand of psy-war. Obviously Germany's and Japan's economic resurrection in the wake of losing World War II was an inspiring model for winning by losing. If the Soviets declared the Cold War over and themselves the losers, perhaps they could prod us into rebuilding their decimated infrastructure, too.

This theory also accounted for the difficulty of finding *New Times*. The local communist faithful were hardly going to knock themselves out to peddle material that undercut their own longtime devotion to Marxism-Leninism. The same issue of *People's Daily World* that provided the address of the sickly Los Angeles clubhouse contained an alternately pitiful and hilarious piece by Michael Parenti bemoaning "the anti-Marxist Soviets." Parenti whines that "'Reform-minded' Soviet intellectuals heap praise on those most critical of Soviet society and disdain the 'soft-minded' ones who might be more restrained in their observations. They even gently criticize hard-liners like [Robert] Conquest for not being ferocious enough." Parenti sadly observes, "The more retrograde and anti-communist the view, the more 'reactionary chic' it is and the more appeal it seems to have."

Is this, then, the death of Soviet propaganda, or is it a leap to a new level of sophisticated manipulation? After all, cautious observers like Edward Jay Epstein have noted a number of earlier Soviet turns to the West, such as the "New Economic Policy" of the 1920's, which were abruptly reversed by dictatorial fiat. And even as I write, Gorbachev keeps consolidating power in the name of democratizing and decentralizing control. Then again, perhaps we are truly in a new era when studies such as *Dezinformatsia* no longer apply. In either case, if *New Times* is still intended as propaganda to influence foreign elites—even if the line being peddled is one of lulling us into complacency and self-congratulation—why is *New Times* nearly impossible to obtain? Conversely, if *New Times* is no longer propaganda, why is it still being published? With a budget of at least two hundred million dollars a year, *New Times* must be justifying its existence to some Soviet bean-counter amidst paper shortages and an economic tailspin.

In an effort to keep a finger on the faltering Soviet pulse, I subscribed to *New Times* last fall. As 1990 came to a close and the Soviet hard-liners clamped down on the Baltic republics, *New Times* continued to be amazingly self-critical of Soviet antidemocratic actions. And then, at the turn of the New Year, *New Times* ceased to show up in the mail altogether. After four or five weeks of missing issues had passed I called Imported Publications in Chicago, one of *New Times*' primary U.S. subscription agencies, and inquired about the vanished magazine. They claimed that a dispute over payment had arisen between Aeroflot (which flies Soviet periodicals to America in bulk) and the Soviets' periodical distribution agency that handles all magazines for exportation. As of last March, *New Times* was still missing in action.

Common sense suggests that internal ideological struggles in the Soviet Union have no doubt had more to do with *New Times*' disappearance than payment disputes between one Soviet agency and another. Then again, I suppose it is possible that *perestroika* got as far as introducing cost accounting to Aeroflot's managers, who decided that they had given a free ride to bulk propaganda shipments for long enough. Perhaps this will be the ultimate fruit of *perestroika*: in the future all propaganda will have to pay its own way.

*Jay Kinney is an editor and writer living in the Bay area.*

## LIBERAL ARTS

### ON REVOLUTION

And the hungry are so hungry, and yet the revolution is right. But it is right not ideologically, but as an *impact*, as *will*, as *despair*. "I am not a saint and perhaps I am even worse than you; but I am hungry, I'm a wolf, hungry and agile, and also my hunger has given me courage; and you have been an ox for a thousand years; if once upon a time you had horns and hooves to kill me, now you are old and feeble, and I'm going to *devour you*."

Revolution and the "old order" are simply "old age" and as yet "undiminished strength." But it is not an ideal, not by any means an ideal!

All social-democratic theories are reduced to the thesis—"I must eat." Well, the thesis is correct. Against it even the Lord Almighty has nothing to say. "He who gave me a stomach must also provide me with food." Cosmogony.

* * *

Yes. But the dreamer walks away: for he loves his dream more than food. And in revolution there is no room for the dream.

And perhaps just because revolution has no room for the dream, it will not succeed. There will be a lot of broken crockery, but there will be no new building erected. For only he alone builds who is capable of an overpowering dream. Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci—they did build, but the revolution will "play them a most prosaic trick" and will strangle them in their youth, at the age of eleven or thirteen, when they suddenly discover something "of their own in their soul."

"Oh, you are proud; you don't want to mix with us, to *share*, to be chums. . . . Oh, you have a soul of your own, not a communal soul. . . . The community that gave life to your parents and to you—for both you and they, without the community, would have died from starvation—is now taking back what you owe it. Die!"

And "the new building," with the features of the ass, will crumble to pieces in the third or in the fourth generation.

—from *Solitaria*,
by V.V. Rozanov, 1912



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# Letter From the Lower Right

*by John Shelton Reed*

## Cardinal Sins

◆

After sharing my ill-informed impressions of California with you last month, I should probably just let it be. After all, only fools think they understand the South after a few months, and I presume the same is true for California. But expatriation here in the Spandex State seems to have dried me up on the subject of the South. Despite the concerned friends who've been writing and sending clippings, I just don't feel *in touch*. Since there are still a couple of months left in our year out here, it looks as if it's California or nothing—and, no, I'm not putting it to a vote.

Tell you what: I'll just tell a few stories and go easy on the meaning of it all, OK?

Let's start with Stanford, where we're living this year. Now, I don't want to pick on the place. It has enough troubles already. This year has seen, for instance, revelations of how overhead money from federal research grants went for things like sheets for the president's custom-made bed. And you've probably been reading about this "political correctness" business lately, too. (Our nation's pack journalists should be penalized for piling on: where have they been all this time?) Anyway, I'll just say that everything you've heard on that subject is true, but I'm surviving. I drop by the Hoover Institution from time to time to get my head straight.

No, Stanford's a great university, arguably the best one west of Fort Smith. Let's get that on the record. It has a first-rate faculty and smart students, and if you think humanistic learning here is not a pretty sight, just wait until what they're doing here trickles down to Generic State U.

One evening I was leaving the library with Susan Howatch's book *Glamorous Powers*, when the student at the inspection desk raised an eyebrow at the title, and asked if it was any good. Realizing that *Glamorous Powers* does sound a little Judith Krantz-y, I mumbled that the book is about the Church of England.

"Oh," the student said. "Is there anything in it about monks? I'm working on a paper on the cenobitic tradition."

Impressed that an undergraduate knew the meaning of "cenobitic," I told him there were some Anglican Benedictines in the book, but it was mostly about ecclesiastical politics—"sort of like Trollope, but around World War Two."

"Trollope," the kid said. "Is that a writer?"

As I said, Stanford students are bright, and they know a lot. But it's next to impossible to guess *what* they know, especially now that Jesse Jackson's friends have cleansed the curriculum of works by dead white European males.

Another story. The dean of the Stanford chapel is an old friend from North Carolina, an Episcopal priest who used to teach at the Duke Divinity School. As you might guess, he wasn't terribly sound to start with, but California hasn't been good for him. On the first Sunday in Advent, for instance, music for the chapel services was provided by a (first-rate) jazz guitarist, who played "Someday My Prince Will Come."

At other services we've found ourselves praying alternately to God the Father and God the Mother. Now I don't know how you feel about it, but that strikes me as rather *Hindu*. I mean, I can live with a genderless deity, but a hermaphroditic one gives me the creeps. Anyway, somebody—probably not me—needs to point out that these, ah, manifestations are locked into traditional sex-roles. The father gets to do all the whiz-bang creating, for instance, and the mother seems to be into nurturing. Maybe they mix it up on alternate Sundays and I just missed it. Neither parent makes any *judgments*, of course.

Speaking of which, Stanford announced a new "domestic partners" policy last fall that opened married student housing to unmarried couples—including unmarried couples of the same sex. When there was an outcry from some married students, my buddy the dean of the chapel chaired a "town meeting" to discuss the new policy. The principal opposition came from foreign students who don't want their children exposed to American ways—at least not these American ways. Asians (the p.c. word for Orientals) seemed especially inclined to this sort of judgmental insensitivity, but what brought the meeting to an abrupt and noisy end was the observation by a Muslim student that in his country, of course, it would be his duty to kill homosexuals.

I wonder if anyone has really thought through this business of "multiculturalism"?

Anyway, on the ground here, outside the hothouse of the university, multiculturalism is a working daily reality. UHF television offers programs in Spanish, Japanese, Farsi, Italian, Evangelical—name your group, and the liability lawyers and chiropractors are advertising in their language. San Francisco has always had its ethnic neighborhoods and restaurants, of course, but now even a suburb like Mountain View offers not just Italian and Mexican restaurants, but Chinese of all regions, Indian (north and south), Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese . . . Walking the main street, you feel as if you're in some exotic entrepôt, a vestpocket version of Singapore, say, or Beirut (in the old days).

It's not unpleasant, and certainly the new immigrants seem to do most of the actual work around here. It looks to me as if it weren't for Asians and Hispanics, the economic base of this place would be a matter of bicycle and roller-skate shops.

By the way, I wrote "Hispanic" instead of "Mexicans" not just to be p.c. A friend whose wife teaches first grade in San Jose reports that more than half of her students are Latin American—not just Mexican, but Honduran, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, differences I suspect most of us in the East never even thought about. The same is true for "Asians," a culturally meaningless hodgepodge of a concept if there ever was one.

Much the same variety can be found within the *voluntary* subcultures. Whatever your hobby, enthusiasm, political or sexual kink, you can find others who share it and gather to do it or talk about it—Tocqueville gone berserk. Some folks go to church on Sunday morning? That's cool. Up the road a way, at the same hour, a hundred motorcyclists gather at Alice's Restaurant for brunch. Off in the other



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direction, a group of software engineers and aging hippies get together to sing the old Primitive Baptist shape-note music. There are weekend subcultures of witches, nudists, skateboarders, and owners of Amiga computers — each with its own computer bulletin board.

Those of us whose development was arrested in the 50's can listen to KOFY, 1050 AM, a radio station that plays only songs from that era. (One listener called in to say that his 20-year-younger wife loves the music he grew up with and "it turns her on in the most delicious way.") We can drive around in fender-skirted '57 Chevies with bumper stickers that say "The Heartbeat of America — Yesterday's Chevrolet," and we can go to Saturday-morning gatherings of other enthusiasts. On Saturday night, we can swing by the Peninsula Creamery for a chocolate malt; only the prices have changed since 1958 (but, boy, have they ever). Or we can dance the night away at ShBoom, a club in San Jose that plays only old rock and roll. Or we can stay home and watch Channel 20's "Dance Party," sort of an American Bandstand for the dental floss set, where people our age put on their old letter sweaters and poodle skirts and show the youngsters how it ought to be done. And this is *Northern* California.

This is partly an urban thing, of course. Georg Simmel wrote about it. It also requires general levels of affluence and leisure that once belonged exclusively to an aristocracy. Tom Wolfe has written about that.

But there's a California overlay on all of this, an "I'm OK, You're OK" ethic of hedonism and tolerance, coupled with an almost complete absence of *noblesse oblige*. I'll let you draw your own conclusions about whether this is wholesome libertarianism or a breakdown in society's immune system (if you'll excuse the unfortunate metaphor), but it is something like what Robert Bellah and his colleague wrote about in *Habits of the Heart*. That book troubled me because it didn't describe any America I knew, but now I see where it's coming from — literally. These California professors did a survey in the Bay Area and thought they were talking about America. Well, they weren't. Not yet, anyway.

Guess I got into the meaning of it all, after all, didn't I? Sorry about that. It's time to go home.

*John Shelton Reed's home is in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, but he has been spending the year in the Bay area.*

# Letter From New Rome

*by William R. Hawkins*

## The Sun Never Sets

◆

An Anglo-Indian force of 24,000 men under General Sir Hugh Gough attacked a Sikh army of 52,000 at Gujarat in the Punjab on February 21, 1849. In the words of Byron Farwell, the Sikhs had "a splendid army. Its equipment was modern and it had the largest artillery park in Asia. The Sikhs made fine soldiers and they had been trained by mercenary European officers." Yet the British routed the Sikhs, losing only 96 killed in the process. Three weeks later the Sikh leaders made a general surrender and the Punjab was annexed to British India.

The Age of Imperialism was full of such lopsided victories where Europeans defeated larger "native" armies on the way to dividing the world into colonies, protectorates, and spheres of influence. Leftists have long condemned the West for imposing itself on the rest of the world, and they have hailed such turning points as the "revival" of China under Chairman Mao and the "defeat" of the United States by Vietnamese peasants as marking the collapse of the West's ability to dominate the Third World. Then in the desert a coalition force spearheaded by American troops, literally taking up where the British left off, routed a larger Iraqi army. Coalition casualties were about the same as Imperial loses at Gujarat even though the forces engaged on both sides were an order of magnitude higher. For every coalition soldier lost, one thousand Iraqis fell. The Iraqis had modern weapons with more tanks and artillery than the coalition. They had been trained by the Russians as the Sikhs had been trained by the French. Some "bean counters" credited Iraq with having the fourth largest military machine in the world, one that was battle-hardened from the war with Iran. Yet it was still a Third World army, militaristic rather than professional; unprepared for combat with First World legions.

Technology played a critical role, but cannot in itself explain the totality of the coalition victory. The Iraqis had access to technology, but could not use it — the prime example being the Soviet and French fighters that the Iraqis could not fly. Technology is a system encompassing both those who develop it and those who use it. It is a manifestation of that matrix of aptitudes, philosophy, experiences, and spirit that form a civilization.

And I do mean "civilization," not mere "culture" as the p.c. academics would have it. The current "multicultural" fad is not new, just more blatant. As a graduate student in the mid-1970's, I had an avowedly Marxist professor of economic history who stressed the variety of economic organization found in other societies and other times, the point being that capitalism was not "normal," let alone "natural." I earned the unofficial title "resident fascist" by pointing out that these other cultures had not accomplished very much compared to the West. The West, in its period of vibrant mercantile and industrial capitalism, has overrun these other cultures. Indeed, the only non-Western cultures that are now advancing are doing so by adopting Western forms. To be worthy of the term "civilization" a culture must do more than exist; it must be successful, spreading its influence and setting a pattern others will wish to follow.

Historians have debated endlessly about what factors produced in the West the matrix that propelled it past the other societies that in the 14th century were on a par with Europe, if indeed not somewhat ahead. What is known is that there has been a marked contrast between Europe and the rest of the world since then.

The most advanced civilization, China, was in decline as the Confucian philosophy tightened its grip on the bureaucratic state in the 15th century. With a philosophy that scorned both military and commercial affairs, China turned inward for five centuries. Laws were passed prohibiting the building of ocean-going ships; thus the fleets that



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had sailed the Indian Ocean and even reached Africa and the Persian Gulf were scrapped. The industrious (and industrializing) Europeans who reopened China were called "barbarians" by a decadent court.

In India, regard for individual achievement was also low, reserved for leaders in religion or philosophy. Those in the West who were motivated by science, personal gain, national ambition, and the quest for glory (usually seen as complementary motives) found an encouragement lacking in Eastern cultures.

Islam had the spirit for expansion, as shown by the rapid conquest of the Middle East, North Africa, and Indonesia and its continuing attempts to push into Central Europe in the 17th century. The Moslems had only been pushed out of Spain shortly before the discovery of the New World. Through the 12th century, they were far ahead of the West in manufacturing, commerce, shipbuilding, and weaponry. The West had to learn much from the Moslems in order to catch up by the 14th century. However, Islamic civilization never completely grasped the scientific philosophy that took hold of the West. Had it done so, history would have been far different. "The white race had used this powerful method to dominate the globe," writes Kurt Mendelssohn in *The Secret of Western Domination*, but adds, "There is no reason to believe that, if another civilization had developed science, it would have desisted from using it for exactly the same purpose."

In his study *Imperialism and the Anti-Imperialist Mind* sociologist Lewis Feuer argued, "When civilization has moved forward in the past, it has invariably been propelled by a strong imperialist movement on the part of the most advanced society." His examples included Athens, Rome, France, and England. These movements "have taken place precisely at times characterized by intellectual progress rather than regress, when something like an intellectual and scientific renaissance was taking place, when a spirit of exuberance and adventure rather than defeat and timorousness prevailed." Elizabethan England produced not just Drake and Raleigh but also Bacon, Shakespeare, and Jonson.

Consider, however, today's victory in the Gulf war and the renewed American preeminence in the wake of the internal collapse of communism and the Soviet Union. Though it can be seen as a confirmation of continuing Western superiority, it also points to the deterioration of the matrix. Contra Feuer, the intellectual life of the West is clearly regressing, not progressing. Indeed, the intellectual establishment was as united against U.S. action as the American people were united behind it.

Fortunately, American society has never depended on intellectuals for leadership. As the intellectuals have turned "timorous" in world affairs and obstructionist in terms of science and material progress, the public has turned hostile to them. The next step will be to direct the renewed national exuberance towards their removal from positions of trust or influence, replacing them with scholars and artists whose ideas reflect the ambitious spirit that built the West.

*William R. Hawkins writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.*

## LIBERAL ARTS

### WAR AND DEMOCRACY

Just a word of comment more upon one of the points in the President's address. He says that this is a war "for the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government." In many places throughout the address is this exalted sentiment given expression.

It is a sentiment peculiarly calculated to appeal to American hearts and, when accompanied by acts consistent with it, is certain to receive our support; but in this same connection, and strangely enough, the President says that we have become convinced that the German Government as it now exists—"Prussian autocracy" he calls it—can never again maintain friendly relations with us. His expression is that "Prussian autocracy was not and could never be our friend," and repeatedly throughout the address the suggestion is made that if the German people would overturn their Government it would probably be the way to peace. So true is this that the dispatches from London all hailed the message of the President as sounding the death knell of Germany's Government.

But the President proposes alliances with Great Britain, which, however liberty-loving its people, is a hereditary monarchy, with a hereditary ruler, with a hereditary House of Lords, with a hereditary landed system, with a limited and restricted suffrage from one class and multiplied suffrage power for another, and with grinding industrial conditions for all the wageworkers. The President has not suggested that we make our support of Great Britain conditional to her granting home rule to Ireland, or Egypt, or India. We rejoice in the establishment of a democracy in Russia, but it will hardly be contended that if Russia was still an autocratic Government, we would not be asked to enter this alliance with her just the same. Italy and the lesser powers of Europe, Japan in the Orient; in fact, all of the countries with whom we are to enter into alliance, except France and newly revolutionized Russia, are still of the old order—and it will be generally conceded that no one of them has done as much for its people in the solution of municipal problems and in securing social and industrial reforms as Germany.

Is it not a remarkable democracy which leagues itself with allies already far overmatching in strength the German nation and holds out to such beleaguered nation the hope of peace only at the price of giving up their Government? I am not talking now of the merits or demerits of any government, but I am speaking of a profession of democracy that is linked in action with the most brutal and domineering use of autocratic power. Are the people of this country being so well represented in this war movement that we need to go abroad to give other people control of their governments? Will the President and the supporters of this war bill submit it to a vote of the people before the declaration of war goes into effect? Until we are willing to do that, it illy becomes us to offer as an excuse for our entry into the war the unsupported claim that this war was forced upon the German people by their Government "without their previous knowledge or approval."

—*Robert M. LaFollette, from the* Congressional Record, *April 4, 1917*



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POLITICS

Jeanne Berg

# EZ Living

*by Jeffrey A. Tucker*

## Enterprise Zones and the Welfare State

Enterprise zones have been a pillar of the Republican antipoverty agenda for at least twelve years. But today enterprise zones (EZs) represent little more than government welfare by another name. As such, they symbolize a general Republican ideological decline from free-market conservatism to big-government welfarism.

Originally, the idea was to use free-market forces, not subsidies, to mitigate inner-city poverty and integrate the inner-city poor into the labor pool. An area declared an EZ was to create a bottom-up entrepreneurial revolution by having no artificial barriers to economic opportunity.

According to Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp, "the purpose behind enterprise zones is really very simple: stop doing things that destroy our cities, snuff out jobs, and smother the entrepreneurial spirit. Instead, foster an investment climate that will create new jobs and help produce hundreds, perhaps thousands, of new entrepreneurs and small business people."

Besides Mr. Kemp, the other veteran enterprise zone advocate is Stuart Butler, director of domestic policy at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. Mr. Kemp and Mr. Butler disagree on who originated EZs. Mr. Butler credits the idea to Britain's Sir Geoffrey Howe, who designed Margaret Thatcher's antipoverty program for industrial cities. Mr. Kemp, however, says the EZ idea comes from his study of postwar history, when the U.S. spurred development in Puerto Rico through a tax-cutting (and subsidy) program called Operation Bootstrap. Mr. Kemp wants to replicate that program in poverty-stricken cities (though he made no mention of subsidies in the early days).

In 1979 Mr. Butler, then writing from London, dispatched the original EZ plan for America in an "International Briefing" published by the Heritage Foundation. It was a radical alternative to the Great Society programs. The EZ would eliminate planning controls (including zoning), abolish minimum wage laws and rent controls, require the selling of "all" city-owned land, and lower property taxes for incoming entrepreneurs. Most importantly, "no company entering a zone would be eligible for any subsidy, grant, or other form of government assistance whatsoever."

It was a good plan, and it might have worked. It didn't cost taxpayers a dime; none of the provisions of the early EZs were redistributive. There was even talk of making the entire country an EZ. The conservative movement universally adopted support for enterprise zones as an ideological litmus test.

But by 1981, when the idea reached the policy stage, the radical EZ plan had been watered down. What the Reagan administration and its associated think tanks supported instead was a version of the EZ concept that had little to do with the original Butler plan. It spoke only of large and diverse tax breaks and minor deregulation; every other provision was tossed out.

Ten years have passed, and despite the hopes of EZ supporters, Congress has not passed a federal EZ plan, except for a 1987 bill that gave HUD the power to declare that 100 targeted areas could receive federal dollars. Because this bill was passed under the discredited Pierce regime, Mr. Kemp has chosen not to act on it. But since 1981, lawmakers in 38 states have adopted some form of EZ legislation, mostly in hopes of benefiting from federal legislation that has yet to materialize. The existing EZ programs, so often praised and analyzed, are all run by the states.

Common to all state EZ plans are tax incentives and regulatory changes for economically depressed areas. Employers are allowed property tax abatements, tax credits for hiring new employees, extended tax write-offs for business losses, income tax credits, and sales tax breaks. The plans also promise to cut red tape that inhibits entrepreneurship. None mentions wage or rent controls or privatization.

Many conservatives have praised these various state plans and urged the federal government to cooperate with its own legislation. Mr. Kemp says, for example, that state-run EZs "have created 180,000 new jobs, retained nearly 68,000 jobs, and promoted more than $9 billion in new investment."

Unfortunately, these numbers cannot be taken at face value. They gloss over the dirty little secret of today's EZs. Besides tax breaks and deregulation, the typical EZ has a third plank: a promise of pro-business welfare. Though this has been completely overlooked in public debate, it amounts to redistribution from taxpayers to businesses.

Among the states offering huge grants to business for "job training" are Vermont, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Kansas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, Oregon, and Nevada. They force taxpayers to pay the salaries, in whole or in part, of new employees. In some cases, the state subsidizes em-



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ployee insurance costs (New Jersey) and even offers free child care (Kansas). It's easy to see how these subsidies will "reduce unemployment."

Nearly all states with an EZ plan offer business loans at below-market interest rates. Some grant 15-year interest-free loans (Florida), and some offer a "guarantee" against business failure so that businesses can operate in the red indefinitely (Maryland). That's a quick way to boost "investment."

Nearly all guarantee businesses "priority status" in receiving all available grants from state, local, and federal government. And most states offer outright grants to new businesses operating out of the ghetto, whether they start there or just move there. "Infrastructure assistance" is offered by many states to rebuild roads and housing, or even to finance construction of the building in which a business operates. (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, and Pennsylvania offer such support, and Indiana is especially generous.)

Many states offer rebates on any money spent on "pollution abatement" and "water supply projects." Some, including Texas and New York, offer utility rates lower than regular businesses pay, and New York offers relocation funds. Oregon offers extended public education for employees and Tennessee promises guaranteed student loans inside the EZ. California even offers "marketing assistance."

If we held a contest for the most stunning package of largess, the winner would be Maine. Its EZ program offers: the Maine Job Development Program Fund for "assistance to businesses"; grants of up to $1,250 "for each new full time quality job"; grants for infrastructure development (from the "Infrastructure Development Program"); planning, marketing, technical assistance, "and other types of capacity building"; "assistance for education, job training, work incentive programs and dependent care"; and a promise that the Finance Authority of Maine and the Maine State Housing Authority will "assist Zones." A bureaucratic mess? Don't worry: the "Opportunity Zone Service Delivery System" will "coordinate development resources and services, including the programs and services of the State Planning Office."

This welfare component is not only a reversal of Stuart Butler's original EZ plan; it completely changes the nature of EZs. Far from offering free-market incentives, they simply add another layer of the welfare muck that already covers the inner city. It is no longer enough to subsidize individuals; businesses have now joined the welfare line.

A study by Miles Friedman, executive director of the National Association of State Development Agencies, documents a recent explosion in the redistributionist component of EZs. The transfers, he says, address "an ever-wider range of business needs." Business should "pay attention" to the growth in "diversity of incentives" beyond tax and regulatory changes because they can alter the "investment equation."

Instead of creating a new class of inner-city entrepreneurs, EZs have attracted development fat cats with the promise of government spoils. In Evansville, Indiana, an EZ attracted a big retailer, T.J. Maxx, to set up a distribution center and warehouse. The company received tax breaks, but the city also spent four million dollars on upgrading water mains and setting up a firehouse in the area. In addition, the state built a daycare center for all employees. This program is considered "model" by *National Journal* magazine.

EZs are also used to keep companies from going out of business when the market dictates that they should. In 1985 Chrysler threatened to close a plant in Illinois that employed 4,200 workers. Then-Governor James Thompson declared it an EZ, with the traditional combination of tax breaks, job training funds, and revenue bonds. New Jersey uses EZs to keep businesses from defecting to New York, with even shopping malls benefiting. Just the threat of moving can help a business extract bribes from local officials in the name of creating an EZ.

The incentives also serve as useful tools in the bidding war to attract businesses to a new area. Parks Sausage Co., for example, opened a new thirteen million dollar plant in Baltimore after the city declared the company's chosen site an EZ. To clinch the deal, the feds threw in a federal urban development action grant (UDAG) worth 2.3 million dollars. But moving businesses out of prosperous areas into the ghetto results in no net wealth gains for the larger community. Unlike regulatory and tax cuts, these outright transfers cost the taxpayer a bundle.

It's not surprising that EZs create local economic boomlets. Old-fashioned redistribution can work temporary wonders. But how many jobs were lost for all the channeling of resources out of the productive economy to make these boomlets possible? How much of this "new investment" is subsidized by transfer payments and wouldn't otherwise be undertaken? Moreover, the examples cited here probably don't cover the full array of subsidies, but only what state governments admit to handing out in their official publications. Not included are the sweeteners that bureaucrats and politicians can add to the pot during the daily grind of politics.

To make matters worse, even the promised regulatory changes in state-run EZs have not panned out, despite what official propaganda says. "In practice, there has been little, if any, elimination of red tape," concludes Michael Allan Wolf (University of Richmond) in his 1990 study of EZs. Instead, EZ businesses are just given special consideration in cutting through: the city will assign a bureaucratic specialist to work with the company in racing through the complex system of zoning and safety standards. But this doesn't help the upstart business with no connections to the government.

As Stuart Butler says, these state programs are "not fundamentally different from traditional economic development policies of special tax breaks and assistance and earmarking of money."

Jack Kemp's office is working to pass new federal EZ legislation. The bill most favored by Mr. Kemp's large EZ promotion staff is sponsored by Charles B. Rangel (D-NY). This is suspicious on its face, since Rangel is Mr. Welfare of the U.S. Congress.

Besides tax breaks, the Rangel bill forces state and local governments to dish out taxpayer money as a qualification for EZ status. "No nominated area shall be designated as an enterprise zone," says the bill, "unless the State and local government" agree "in writing" to link tax benefits to "job training, transportation, education, day care, health care, and other social serv-



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ice support," including "provisions of supporting public facilities and infrastructure improvements."

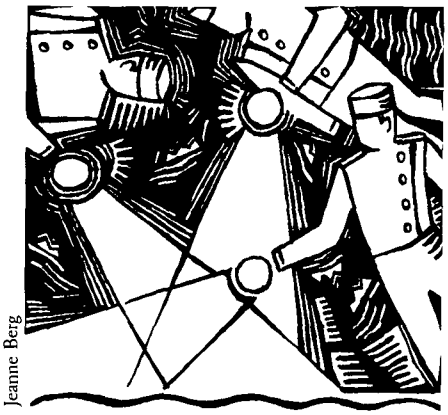
This bill will only bolster the worst habit of state governments: spending tax dollars on favored interest groups. These subsidies are paid for by taxpayers outside the state by laundering them through various federal grant-giving agencies. But why should the government loot taxpayers so corporations can go on the public dole in the inner city? This will not create prosperity, only make a new class of people welfare-dependent.

If the original EZ program were restored, with its radical overhaul of labor law and rent control, its full privatization, and its strictures against welfare, it probably would deserve support—but only because it would serve as a metaphor for what the whole country ought to be like. As things are, why don't conservatives drop their support of EZs? Many are simply no longer interested in fundamental reform. Instead, they are satisfied to make big government "work better." "An enterprise zone creates a climate that could enhance the effectiveness of government programs," says one conservative EZ advocate. It is a "base for other policies," for example a "training program," an outright grant, "or similar government project."

Many other EZ supporters privately repudiate the program's association with government spoils but would like to salvage the rest. However, under today's egalitarian democratic political system, in which no one's property is safe, it is impossible to isolate the decent parts of EZs from the corrupt parts. Far better to advocate a revolutionary approach that totally dismantles the democratic social welfare apparatus, and accept no compromise in the meantime.

*Jeffrey A. Tucker is a fellow of the Ludwig von Mises Institute. He lives outside of Washington, D.C.*

## FILM



Jeanne Berg

# Antecedents

*by David R. Slavitt*

**Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead**
*Produced by Michael Brandman and Emanuel Azenberg*
*Written and directed by Tom Stoppard*
*Released by Cinecom*

**Scenes From a Mall**
*Produced and directed by Paul Mazursky*
*Written by Roger L. Simon and Mr. Mazursky*
*Released by Buena Vista Pictures*

It is usually a reliable rule that when moviemakers decide to "open up" a stage play to adapt it to the screen with its voracious appetite for scenery, they lose more in focus and intensity than they gain in pretty vistas. I worried, therefore, about the opening shots of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, a dazzlingly depressing panorama of cliffs with a narrow road on which two figures appear. Where are we? What's going on?

The cliffs are, almost certainly, somewhere in Yugoslavia, where much of this film was shot. And the two figures are Ros and Guil, on their way to Elsinore, where they have been summoned by the king who wants their help in understanding the reason for Prince Hamlet's melancholy and peculiar behavior. The Yugoslav scenery and, indeed, the Brezice Castle that stands in for the seat of the Danish Royal House are stark, lavish but primitive, the kind of thing that Kurosawa finds all the time as backdrops for his semi-mythic Samurai epics. The film is certainly gorgeous (Peter Biziou, who won an Oscar for Best Cinematography for *Mississippi Burning*, is the director of photography), but that doesn't get in the way of Stoppard's vision of the funny cruelty of life. He has, since 1967, when the play opened at the Old Vic, rethought the whole matter, so that now, instead of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern standing in place as the play rushes past them, they are racing around, trying to figure out what is going on, popping up at the wrong time and at the most awkward places, overhearing snatches of conversation—lines from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* mostly—and utterly failing to understand anything at all. They haven't a clue about the enormous tragedy on the fringes of which they are darting and feinting, and because of their epic denseness they enlarge, as Vladimir and Estragon enlarge in *Waiting for Godot*, or as the Fool enlarges in *King Lear*.

The film is, on every count, and by any measure, an enormous success. All the energies and inventive liveliness of Rosencrantz (Gary Oldman), Guildenstern (Tim Roth), and the player (Richard Dreyfuss) go to distracting us, but the vision of the film keeps our attention fixed nevertheless on its mournful heart. Stoppard seems finally to be telling us that Shakespeare didn't have it wrong, after all.

According to one interpretation of the story in the Bible of Abraham and Isaac, that whole business about the sacrifice is a kind of charade. God isn't really asking Abraham to do such a barbarous thing. God knows this, and Abraham knows it too, even as he climbs the mountain with Isaac at his side. Even Isaac, at some level, understands that this can't really be happening. But for the ram, the innocent bystander, these theological jokes and games turn out to be deadly serious. It is always the innocent bystanders who suffer. This is what happens in Stoddard's play and film. The players do a mini version of *Hamlet* (something like Stoppard's own *Five Minute Hamlet*) and at the end, the chief player says, "A slaughterhouse! Eight



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corpses all told. It brings out the best in us." Rosencrantz counts them up, and says, "Six!" and the player glares at them and insists, "Eight."

They don't know that he's talking about them. They don't know, can't know, anything. Indeed, one of the sublime elegances of this film is its representation of stupidity, of amazing invincible ignorance, over and over again. It is the signature of these two oafs, and they are rather sweet about it. What Stoppard has contrived for them is a series of great moments in the history of physics. An apple falls on Rosencrantz's head, and he thinks about it, considers it quite deeply, and then remarks, "I say . . . Would you like a bite?" He drops a feather and a wooden juggling ball from the gallery of an indoor tennis court, and of course in his experiment the feather floats down much more slowly than the wooden ball. He sees a series of hanging pots that are arranged in the manner of those toys for executives' desks. He raises one, lets it hit the others, and watches in amazement as the energy is transferred to make the pot at the other end swing out. "Here, watch this," he says, does it again, but raises the pot too far so that all it does is shatter.

Incomprehension is the basis of the jokes, but it is also a statement of the human condition. At one point, just before the conclusion (which is not a surprise, if we have been paying attention to such hints as the title provides), one of the unfortunate pair says to the other that there must have been a moment when they could have escaped this, when they could have avoided this whole ruinous business, "But if there was, we missed it." They may have missed it, but we catch it clearly enough, as we watch them betray — unthinkingly — their boyhood friend, Hamlet.

Language is not what film does particularly well, but even here, Stoppard manages remarkable feats. He was obliged to do this, for, in his vision of the world, language is not merely an occasion for show-off vaudeville routines but is itself the snare in which his characters are trapped. They struggle in it, only to enmesh themselves more completely. They get referents wrong, and do show-biz turns that are entertaining but are also totally useless, that won't get them out of Elsinore or keep them from the terrible fate that waits for them like a large vicious dog. (The sound of barking dogs is heard over and over again, a low-comedy *leitmotif*.) The player tells them, "The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily — that is what tragedy means." But they are not warned.

"There is something they're not telling us," Guildenstern says. "What?" the other asks. And of course Guildenstern shouts louder, "There is something they're not telling us."

Thus they persist in their entertaining and yet pathetic word games, one of the best of which is the Question Game. On the stage, it was played down in one, before the footlights. In the film, Ros and Guil are on a tennis court, serving and volleying over a bedraggled net, and moving about the court in inevitable ways. (The object of the game is to keep talking but always to avoid declarative statements. One must remain in the interrogative mode.)

It is Monty Python-ism but not sheer, not pure, because it is rooted in


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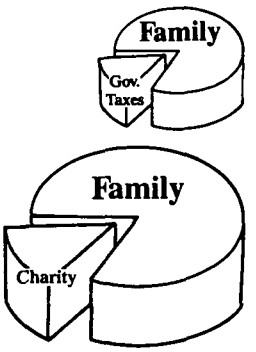


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humane feeling. The comedy dazzles all the more brightly for its woeful cast, as it did with Keaton and Chaplin, as it did with Jacques Tati. The undergraduate send-up of this monstrous cultural icon, which is what Stoppard began with in his original one-act burlesque, has deepened and darkened, has become, itself, a more than respectable success (with a Tony and a New York Drama Critics Circle Award), and yet Stoppard has not been at all intimidated by his own play's reputation. He is free and breezy, easy and sure, both as a screenwriter and director. Richard Dreyfuss is splendid as the ominous clown, carrying himself with a dignity that could serve in one of Ingmar Bergman's mannered extravaganzas. And Oldman and Roth are fine as Ros and Guil. There is also a remarkable Yugoslav puppeteer, Zlkatko Bourek, who does the play-within-the-play-within-the-play and is properly eerie and yet, also, funny—as the larger action is and has to be. It is a remarkable achievement, one I applaud without reservation.

My expectations were less guarded about *Scenes From a Mall*. I had liked Mazursky's previous picture, *Enemies, A Love Story*, and I am a Woody Allen fan and a Bette Midler admirer. Malls are funny. How could they go wrong?

Well, they don't really. Indeed, the problem may be that the film gets so many things nearly right as to suggest earlier and better movies. The antecedents it summons to mind only dwarf the picture that is before us. The concept is an odd one—take Ingmar Bergman's *Scenes From a Marriage* and shoot most of it in a huge shopping mall, to approximate Jacques Tati's *Playtime*. And with Woody Allen and Bette Midler, there will hardly be much need for characterization. Those actors bring character with them, after all.

What this works out to is a diverting enough representation of dire luxury and its stresses. There are a number of quite funny moments—from a series of foreign cars, all of them caught in a traffic jam at the entrance to the mall's parking area, and in which all of the drivers are talking on their car phones, to a woeful moment in which Deborah and Nick (Midler and Allen) are drafting a separation agreement and a mariachi band descends upon them to serenade aggressively. There is a mime working the mall (Bill Irwin), and he keeps following the distressed couple around from one setting to another, making light of their misery or getting their moments of happiness wrong. This is all pleasant, clever enough fun, so that one feels slightly churlish demanding more.

But the Bergman references, both in the title and in the structure of the film, remind us how much better this kind of material can be. The pain of a Bette Midler is never far enough from comedy; Allen's distress is exactly what he has made a living by flaunting for years and years; and the script doesn't give either one of them a whole lot of help. Their extramarital affairs are just not believable and therefore not consequential. But it is the other reference, to *Playtime*, and the recollection we have of Jacques Tati's brilliant exposition of the oppressive inhumanity of Mies van der Rohe architecture that leaves us feeling all but swindled here. This is a great mall Mazursky has found—or confected out of the Stamford Town Center in Connecticut and the Beverly Center in California, a truly surrealistic temple to consumption, acquisition, and instant gratification. What Tati did demolishing that pretentious restaurant, should have been done here. There ought to be more small incidents, more telling faces, more surprising grotesques and caricatures—more of anything than the slightly pained smile Mazursky managed to generate and wants to share with us.

What I am demanding, of course, is vision, poetry, anger, idiosyncratic and extravagant personality, hysteria, hilarity, disgust . . . anything real. Real human qualities and emotions can't exist in the little modules the malls provide. The air is processed, the decor is all contrived, and their purpose is to dazzle and benumb the customers, the better to part them from their money or, more likely, make imprints from their plastic. Malls are monstrous selling machines, and their resemblance to any actual life forms is temporary, arbitrary, and capricious. Tati's mournful assertion of awkward dignity in the face of these impersonal monuments to commerce is just what Mazursky and his friends cannot afford to suggest. It might have been within Allen's range—one remembers that huge photo-mural in the dining room of the apartment in *Stardust Memories* (1980) of the Vietnamese at the point of being executed—but Mazursky wasn't crazed enough or desperate enough to take the necessary risks. About the worst disaster that happens here is that Nick forgets where he left the personalized surfboard he has been schlepping around from scene to scene. But it is hard for us to care much, because it was impossible to imagine either Nick or Woody Allen on that surfboard, hanging ten or even just hanging on for dear life.

Either Mazursky was too smart and too shrewd or else not smart enough, but, sure, see *Scenes From a Mall*. It has its pleasant moments. Afterwards, though, you should rent the videocassette of *Playtime* and look at that, two or three times, in order to refresh your notions of how good a movie can be.

*David R. Slavitt is a poet and novelist living in Philadelphia.*

Rolf Konow/Cinecom

*Gary Oldman as Rosencrantz.*



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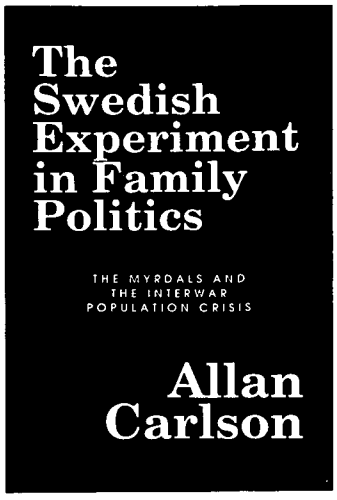


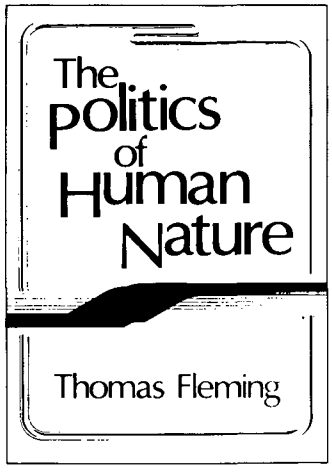


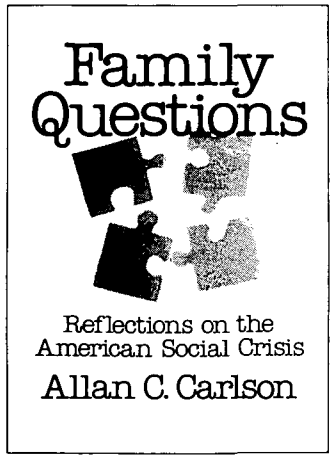


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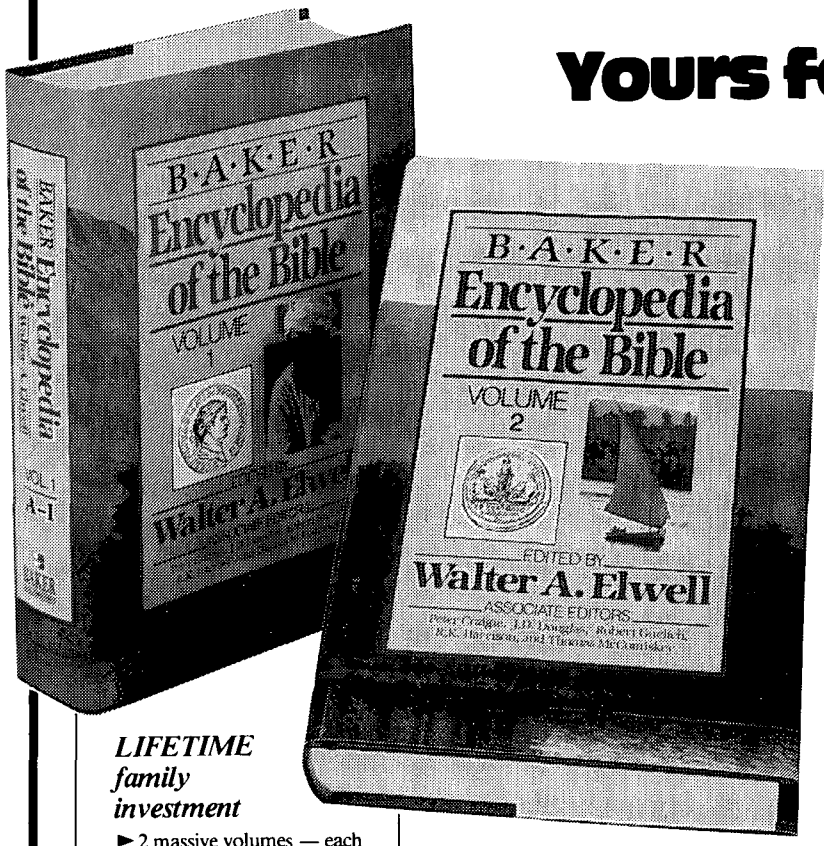


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